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LECTURES

ON

RHETORIC

AND

BELLES LETTRES.

By HUGH BLAIR, D. D.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE HIGH CHURCH, AND PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC AND BELLES LETTRES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Third American Edition.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PREFACE.

THE following LECTURES were read in the Univerſity of Edinburgh, for twenty-four years. The publication of them, at preſent, was not altogether a matter of choice. Imperfect Copies of them, in Manuſcript, from notes taken by Students who heard them read, were firſt privately handed about; and afterwards frequently expoſed to public ſale. When the Author ſaw them circulate ſo currently, as even to be quoted in print,* and found himſelf often threatened with ſurreptitious publications of them, he judged it to be high time that they ſhould proceed from his own hand, rather than come into public view under ſome very defective and erroneous form.

They

* Biographia Britannica. Article, ADDISON.

They were originally deſigned for the initiation of youth into the ſtudy of Belles Lettres, and of Compoſition. With the ſame intention they are now publiſhed; and, therefore, the form of Lectures, in which they were at firſt compoſed, is ſtill retained. The Author gives them to the world, neither as a work wholly original, nor as a Compilation from the Writings of others. On every ſubject contained in them, he has thought for himſelf. He conſulted his own ideas and reflections: and a great part of what will be found in theſe Lectures is entirely his own. At the ſame time, he availed himſelf of the ideas and reflections of others, as far as he thought them proper to be adopted. To proceed in this manner, was his duty as a Public Profeſſor. It was incumbent on him, to convey to his Pupils all the knowledge that could improve them; to deliver not merely what was new, but what might be uſeful, from whatever quarter it came. He hopes, that to ſuch as are ſtudying to cultivate their Taſte, to form their Style, or to prepare themſelves for Public Speaking or Compoſition, his Lectures will afford a more comprehenſive view of what relates to theſe ſubjects, than, as far as he knows, is to be received from any one book in our Language.

In

In order to render his Work of greater ſervice, he has generally referred to the Books which he conſulted, as far as he remembers them; that the Readers might be directed to any farther illuſtration which they afford. But, as ſuch a length of time has elapſed ſince the firſt Compoſition of his Lectures, he may, perhaps, have adopted the ſentiments of ſome Author into whoſe Writings he had then looked, without now remembering whence he derived them.

In the opinions which he has delivered concerning ſuch a variety of Authors, and of literary matters, as come under his conſideration, he cannot expect that all his readers will concur with him. The ſubjects are of ſuch a nature, as allow room for much diverſity of taſte and ſentiment: and the Author will reſpectfully ſubmit to the judgment of the Public.

Retaining the ſimplicity of the Lecturing Style, as beſt fitted for conveying inſtruction, he has aimed, in his Language, at no more than perſpicuity. If, after the liberties which it was neceſſary for him to take, in criticiſing the Style of the moſt eminent

Writers

Writers in our language, his own Style ſhall be thought open to reprehenſion, all that he can ſay, is, that his Book will add one to the many proofs already afforded to the world, of its being much eaſier to give inſtruction, than to ſet example.

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LECTURES ON RHETORIC, &c.

LECTURE I.

INTRODUCTION.

ONE of the moſt diſtinguiſhed privileges which Providence has conferred upon mankind, is the power of communicating their thoughts to one another. Deſtitute of this power, Reaſon would be a ſolitary, and, in ſome meaſure, an unavailing principle. *Speech is the great inſtrument by which* man becomes beneficial to man: and it is to the intercourſe and tranſmiſſion of thought, by means of ſpeech, that we are chiefly indebted for the improvement of thought itſelf. Small are the advantages which a ſingle unaſſiſted individual can make towards perfecting any of his powers. What we call human reaſon, is not the effort or ability of one, ſo much as it is the reſult of the reaſon of many, ariſing from lights mutually communicated, in conſequence of diſcourſe and writing.

It is obvious, then, that writing and diſcourſe are objects entitled to the higheſt attention. Whether the influence of the ſpeaker, or the entertainment of the hearer, be conſulted; whether utility or pleaſure be the principal aim in view, we are prompted, by the ſtrongeſt motives, to ſtudy how we may communicate our thoughts to one another with moſt advantage. Accordingly we find, that in almoſt every nation, as ſoon as language had extended itſelf beyond that ſcanty communication which was requiſite for the ſupply of men's neceſſities, the improvement of diſcourſe began to attract regard. In the language even of rude uncultivated tribes, we can trace ſome attention to the grace and force of thoſe expreſſions which they

uſed, when they ſought to perſuade or to affect. They were early ſenſible of a beauty in diſcourſe, and endeavoured to give it certain decorations which experience had taught them it was capable of receiving, long before the ſtudy of thoſe decorations was formed into a regular art.

But, among nations in a civilized ſtate, no art has been cultivated with more care, than that of language, ſtyle, and compoſition. The attention paid to it, may, indeed, be aſſumed as one mark of the progreſs of ſociety towards its moſt improved period. For, according as ſociety improves and flouriſhes, men acquire more influence over one another by means of reaſoning and diſcourſe; and in proportion as that influence is felt to enlarge, it muſt follow, as a natural conſequence, that they will beſtow more care upon the methods of expreſſing their conceptions with propriety and eloquence. Hence we find, that in all the poliſhed nations of Europe, this ſtudy has been treated as highly important, and has poſſeſſed a conſiderable place in every plan of liberal education.

Indeed, when the arts of ſpeech and writing are mentioned, I am ſenſible that prejudices againſt them are apt to riſe in the minds of many. A ſort of art is immediately thought of, that is oſtentatious and deceitful; the minute and trifling ſtudy of words alone; the pomp of expreſſion; the ſtudied fallacies of rhetoric; ornament ſubſtituted in the room of uſe. We need not wonder, that under ſuch imputations, all ſtudy of diſcourſe as an art, ſhould have ſuffered in the opinion of men of underſtanding: and I am far from denying, that rhetoric and criticiſm have ſometimes been ſo managed as to tend to the corruption, rather than to the improvement, of good taſte and true eloquence. But ſure it is equally poſſible to apply the principles of reaſon and good ſenſe to this art, as to any other that is cultivated among men. If the following Lectures have any merit, it will conſiſt in an endeavour to ſubſtitute the application of theſe principles in the place of artificial and ſcholaſtic rhetoric; in an endeavour to explode falſe ornament, to direct attention more towards ſubſtance than ſhow, to recommend good ſenſe as the foundation of all good compoſition, and ſimplicity as eſſential to all true ornament.

When entering on the ſubject, I may be allowed, on this occaſion, to ſuggeſt a few thoughts concerning the importance

and

and advantages of ſuch ſtudies, and the rank they are entitled to poſſeſs in academical education.* I am under no temptation for this purpoſe, of extolling their importance at the expenſe of any other department of ſcience. On the contrary, the ſtudy of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres ſuppoſes and requires a proper acquaintance with the reſt of the liberal arts. It embraces them all within its circle, and recommends them to the higheſt regard. The firſt care of all ſuch as wiſh either to write with reputation, or to ſpeak in public ſo as to command attention, muſt be, to extend their knowledge; to lay in a rich ſtore of ideas relating to thoſe ſubjects of which the occaſions of life may call them to diſcourſe or to write. Hence, among the ancients, it was a fundamental principle, and frequently inculcated, "Quod omnibus diſciplinis et artibus debet eſſe inſtructus "orator;" that the orator ought to be an accompliſhed ſcholar, and converſant in every part of learning. It is indeed impoſſible to contrive an art, and very pernicious it were if it could be contrived, which ſhould give the ſtamp of merit to any compoſition rich or ſplendid in expreſſion, but barren or erroneous in thought. They are the wretched attempts towards an art of this kind which have ſo often diſgraced oratory, and debaſed it below its true ſtandard. The graces of compoſition have been employed to diſguiſe or to ſupply the want of matter; and the temporary applauſe of the ignorant has been courted, inſtead of the laſting approbation of the diſcerning. But ſuch impoſture can never maintain its ground long. Knowledge and ſcience muſt furniſh the materials that form the body and ſubſtance of any valuable compoſition. Rhetoric ſerves to add the poliſh; and we know that none but firm and ſolid bodies can be poliſhed well.

Of thoſe who peruſe the following Lectures, ſome, by the profeſſion to which they addict themſelves, or in conſequence of their prevailing inclination, may have the view of being employed in compoſition, or in public ſpeaking. Others, without

* The Author was the firſt who read Lectures on this ſubject in the Univerſity of Edinburgh. He began with reading them in a private character in the year 1759. In the following year he was choſen Profeſſor of Rhetoric by the magiſtrates and town-council of Edinburgh: and, in 1762, his Majeſty was pleaſed to erect and endow a Profeſſion of Rhetoric and Belles Lettres in the Univerſity; and the Author was appointed the firſt Regius Profeſſor.

out any prospect of this kind, may wish only to improve their taste with respect to writing and discourse, and to acquire principles which will enable them to judge for themselves in that part of literature called the Belles Lettres.

With respect to the former, such as may have occasion to communicate their sentiments to the Public, it is abundantly clear that some preparation of study is requisite for the end which they have in view. To speak or to write perspicuously and agreeably, with purity, with grace and strength, are attainments of the utmost consequence to all who purpose, either by speech or writing, to address the Public. For without being master of those attainments, no man can do justice to his own conceptions; but how rich soever he may be in knowledge and in good sense, will be able to avail himself less of those treasures, than such as possess not half his store, but who can display what they possess with more propriety. Neither are these attainments of that kind for which we are indebted to nature merely. Nature has, indeed, conferred upon some a very favourable distinction in this respect, beyond others. But in these, as in most other talents she bestows, she has left much to be wrought out by every man's own industry. So conspicuous have been the effects of study and improvement in every part of eloquence; such remarkable examples have appeared of persons surmounting, by their diligence, the disadvantages of the most untoward nature, that among the learned it has long been a contested, and remains still an undecided point, whether nature or art confer most towards excelling in writing or discourse.

With respect to the manner in which art can most effectually furnish assistance for such a purpose, there may be diversity of opinions. I by no means pretend to say that mere rhetorical rules, how just soever, are sufficient to form an orator. Supposing natural genius to be favourable, more by a great deal will depend upon private application and study, than upon any system of instruction that is capable of being publickly communicated. But at the same time, though rules and instructions cannot do all that is requisite, they may, however, do much that is of real use. They cannot, it is true, inspire genius; but they can direct and assist it. They cannot remedy barrenness; but they may correct redundancy. They point out proper

per models for imitation. They bring into view the chief beauties that ought to be ſtudied, and the principal faults that ought to be avoided; and thereby tend to enlighten taſte, and to lead genius from unnatural deviations, into its proper channel. What would not avail for the production of great excellencies, may at leaſt ſerve to prevent the commiſſion of conſiderable errors.

All that regards the ſtudy of eloquence and compoſition, merits the higher attention upon this account, that it is intimately connected with the improvement of our intellectual powers. For I muſt be allowed to ſay, that when we are employed, after a proper manner, in the ſtudy of compoſition, we are cultivating reaſon itſelf. True rhetoric and ſound logic are very nearly allied. The ſtudy of arranging and expreſſing our thoughts with propriety, teaches to think, as well as to ſpeak, accurately. By putting our ſentiments into words, we always conceive them more diſtinctly. Every one who has the ſlighteſt acquaintance with compoſition knows, that when he expreſſes himſelf ill on any ſubject, when his arrangement becomes looſe, and his ſentences turn feeble, the defects of his ſtyle can, almoſt on every occaſion, be traced back to his indiſtinct conception of the ſubject: ſo cloſe is the connexion between thoughts and the words in which they are clothed.

The ſtudy of compoſition, important in itſelf at all times, has acquired additional importance from the taſte and manners of the preſent age. It is an age wherein improvements, in every part of ſcience, have been proſecuted with ardour. To all the liberal arts much attention has been paid; and to none more than to the beauty of language, and the grace and elegance of every kind of writing. The public ear is become refined. It will not eaſily bear what is ſlovenly and incorrect. Every author muſt aſpire to ſome merit in expreſſion, as well as in ſentiment, if he would not incur the danger of being neglected and deſpiſed.

I will not deny that the love of minute elegance, and attention to inferior ornaments of compoſition, may at preſent have engroſſed too great a degree of the public regard. It is indeed my opinion, that we lean to this extreme; often more careful of poliſhing ſtyle, than of ſtoring it with thought. Yet hence

ariſes

ariſes a new reaſon for the ſtudy of juſt and proper compoſition. If it be requiſite not to be deficient in elegance or ornament in times when they are in ſuch high eſtimation, it is ſtill more requiſite to attain the power of diſtinguiſhing falſe ornament from true, in order to prevent our being carried away by that torrent of falſe and frivolous taſte, which never fails, when it is prevalent, to ſweep along with it the raw and the ignorant. They who have never ſtudied eloquence in its principles, nor have been trained to attend to the genuine and manly beauties of good writing, are always ready to be caught by the mere glare of language; and when they come to ſpeak in public, or to compoſe, have no other ſtandard on which to form themſelves, except what chances to be faſhionable and popular, how corrupted ſoever, or erroneous, that may be.

But as there are many who have no ſuch objects as either compoſition or public ſpeaking in view, let us next conſider what advantages may be derived by them, from ſuch ſtudies as form the ſubject of theſe Lectures. To them, rhetoric is not ſo much a practical art as a ſpeculative ſcience; and the ſame inſtructions which aſſiſt others in compoſing, will aſſiſt them in judging of, and reliſhing, the beauties of compoſition. Whatever enables genius to execute well, will enable taſte to criticiſe juſtly.

When we name criticiſing, prejudices may perhaps ariſe, of the ſame kind with thoſe which I mentioned before with reſpect to rhetoric. As rhetoric has been ſometimes thought to ſignify nothing more than the ſcholaſtic ſtudy of words, and phraſes, and tropes, ſo criticiſm has been conſidered as merely the art of finding faults; as the frigid application of certain technical terms, by means of which perſons are taught to cavil and cenſure in a learned manner. But this is the criticiſm of pedants only. True criticiſm is a liberal and humane art. It is the offſpring of good ſenſe and refined taſte. It aims at acquiring a juſt diſcernment of the real merit of authors. It promotes a lively reliſh of their beauties, while it preſerves us from that blind and implicit veneration which would confound their beauties and faults in our eſteem. It teaches us, in a word, to admire and to blame with judgment, and not to follow the crowd blindly.

In

In an age when works of genius and literature are so frequently the subjects of discourse, when every one erects himself into a judge, and when we can hardly mingle in polite society without bearing some share in such discussions; studies of this kind, it is not to be doubted, will appear to derive part of their importance from the use to which they may be applied in furnishing materials for those fashionable topics of discourse, and thereby enabling us to support a proper rank in social life.

But I should be sorry if we could not rest the merit of such studies on somewhat of solid and intrinsical use, independent of appearance and show. The exercise of taste and of sound criticism, is in truth one of the most improving employments of the understanding. To apply the principles of good sense to composition and discourse; to examine what is beautiful, and why it is so; to employ ourselves in distinguishing accurately between the specious and the solid, between affected and natural ornament, must certainly improve us not a little in the most valuable part of all philosophy, the philosophy of human nature. For such disquisitions are very intimately connected with the knowledge of ourselves. They necessarily lead us to reflect on the operations of the imagination, and the movements of the heart; and increase our acquaintance with some of the most refined feelings which belong to our frame.

Logical and Ethical disquisitions move in a higher sphere; and are conversant with objects of a more severe kind; the progress of the understanding in its search after knowledge, and the direction of the will in the proper pursuit of good. In these they point out to man the improvement of his nature as an intelligent being; and his duties as the subject of moral obligation. Belles Lettres and criticism chiefly consider him as a Being endowed with those powers of taste and imagination, which were intended to embellish his mind, and to supply him with rational and useful entertainment. They open a field of investigation peculiar to themselves. All that relates to beauty, harmony, grandeur, and elegance; all that can soothe the mind, gratify the fancy, or move the affections, belongs to their province. They present human nature under a different aspect from that which it assumes to the view of other sciences. They

bring

bring to light various ſprings of action which without their aid might have paſſed unobſerved; and which, though of a delicate nature, frequently exert a powerful influence on ſeveral departments of human life.

Such ſtudies have alſo this peculiar advantage, that they exerciſe our reaſon without fatiguing it. They lead to inquiries acute, but not painful; profound, but not dry nor abſtruſe. They ſtrew flowers in the path of ſcience; and while they keep the mind bent, in ſome degree, and active, they relieve it at the ſame time from that more toilſome labour to which it muſt ſubmit in the acquiſition of neceſſary erudition, or the inveſtigation of abſtract truth.

The cultivation of taſte is farther recommended by the happy effects which it naturally tends to produce on human life. The moſt buſy man, in the moſt active ſphere, cannot be always occupied by buſineſs. Men of ſerious profeſſions cannot always be on the ſtretch of ſerious thought. Neither can the moſt gay and flouriſhing ſituations of fortune afford any man the power of filling all his hours with pleaſure. Life muſt always languiſh in the hands of the idle. It will frequently languiſh even in the hands of the buſy, if they have not ſome employment ſubſidiary to that which forms their main purſuit. How then ſhall theſe vacant ſpaces, thoſe unemployed intervals, which, more or leſs, occur, in the life of every one, be filled up? How can we contrive to diſpoſe of them in any way that ſhall be more agreeable in itſelf, or more conſonant to the dignity of the human mind, than in the entertainments of taſte, and the ſtudy of polite literature? He who is ſo happy as to have acquired a reliſh for theſe, has always at hand an innocent and irreproachable amuſement for his leiſure hours, to ſave him from the danger of many a pernicious paſſion. He is not in hazard of being a burden to himſelf. He is not obliged to fly to low company, or to court the riot of looſe pleaſures, in order to cure the tediouſneſs of exiſtence.

Providence ſeems plainly to have pointed out this uſeful purpoſe to which the pleaſures of taſte may be applied, by interpoſing them in a middle ſtation between the pleaſures of ſenſe, and thoſe of pure intellect. We were not deſigned to grovel always among objects ſo low as the former; nor are we capa-

ble

ble of dwelling conſtantly in ſo high a region as the latter. The pleaſures of taſte refreſh the mind after the toils of the intellect, and the labours of abſtract ſtudy; and they gradually raiſe it above the attachments of ſenſe, and prepare it for the enjoyments of virtue.

So conſonant is this to experience, that in the education of youth, no object has in every age appeared more important to wiſe men, than to tincture them early with a reliſh for the entertainments of taſte. The tranſition is commonly made with eaſe from theſe to the diſcharge of the higher and more important duties of life. Good hopes may be entertained of thoſe whoſe minds have this liberal and elegant turn. Many virtues may be grafted upon it. Whereas to be entirely devoid of reliſh for eloquence, poetry, or any of the fine arts, is juſtly conſtrued to be an unpromiſing ſymptom of youth; and raiſes ſuſpicions of their being prone to low gratifications, or deſtined to drudge in the more vulgar and illiberal purſuits of life.

There are indeed few good diſpoſitions of any kind with which the improvement of taſte is not more or leſs connected. A cultivated taſte increaſes ſenſibility to all the tender and humane paſſions, by giving them frequent exerciſe; while it tends to weaken the more violent and fierce emotions.

——— Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes.
Emollit mores, nec finit eſſe feros.*

The elevated ſentiments and high examples which poetry, eloquence and hiſtory are often bringing under our view, naturally tend to nouriſh in our minds public ſpirit, the love of glory, contempt of external fortune, and the admiration of what is truly illuſtrious and great.

I will not go ſo far as to ſay that the improvement of taſte and of virtue is the ſame; or that they may always be expected to co-exiſt in an equal degree. More powerful correctives than taſte can apply, are neceſſary for reforming the corrupt propenſities which too frequently prevail among mankind. Elegant ſpeculations are ſometimes found to float on the ſurface of the mind, while bad paſſions poſſeſs the interior regions of

* Theſe poliſh'd arts have humaniz'd mankind,
Soften'd the rude, and calm'd the boiſt'rous mind.

the heart. At the ſame time, this cannot but be admitted, that the exerciſe of taſte is, in its native tendency, moral and putrifying. From reading the moſt admired productions of genius, whether in poetry or proſe, almoſt every one riſes with ſome good impreſſions left on his mind; and though theſe may not always be durable, they are at leaſt to be ranked among the means of diſpoſing the heart to virtue. One thing is certain, and I ſhall hereafter have occaſion to illuſtrate it more fully, that, without poſſeſſing the virtuous affections in a ſtrong degree, no man can attain eminence in the ſublime parts of eloquence. He muſt feel what a good man feels, if he expects greatly to move or to intereſt mankind. They are the ardent ſentiments of honour, virtue, magnanimity, and public ſpirit, that only can kindle that fire of genius, and call up into the mind thoſe high ideas, which attract the admiration of ages; and if this ſpirit be neceſſary to produce the moſt diſtinguiſhed efforts of eloquence, it muſt be neceſſary alſo to our reliſhing them with proper taſte and feeling.

On theſe general topics I ſhall dwell no longer; but proceed directly to the conſideration of the ſubjects which are to employ the following Lectures. They divide themſelves into five parts. Firſt, ſome introductory diſſertations on the nature of taſte, and upon the ſources of its pleaſures. Secondly, the conſideration of language: Thirdly, of ſtyle: Fourthly, of eloquence, properly ſo called, or public ſpeaking in its different kinds. Laſtly, a critical examination of the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſpecies of compoſition, both in proſe and verſe.

LECTURE

LECTURE II.

TASTE.

THE nature of the preſent undertaking leads me to begin with ſome inquiries concerning Taſte, as it is this faculty which is always appealed to, in diſquiſitions concerning the merit of diſcourſe and writing.

There are few ſubjects on which men talk more loofely and indiſtinctly than on Taſte; few which it is more difficult to explain with preciſion; and none which in this Courſe of Lectures will appear more dry or abſtract. What I have to ſay on the ſubject ſhall be in the following order. I ſhall firſt explain the Nature of Taſte as a power or faculty in the human mind. I ſhall next conſider how far it is an improveable faculty. I ſhall ſhew the ſources of its improvement, and the characters of taſte in its moſt perfect ſtate. I ſhall then examine the various fluctuations to which it is liable, and inquire whether there be any ſtandard to which we can bring the different taſtes of men, in order to diſtinguiſh the corrupted from the true.

Taſte may be defined "The power of receiving pleaſure "from the beauties of nature and of art." The firſt queſtion that occurs concerning it is, whether it is to be conſidered as an internal ſenſe, or as an exertion of reaſon? Reaſon is a very general term; but if we underſtand by it, that power of the mind which in ſpeculative matters diſcovers truth, and in practical matters judges of the fitneſs of means to an end, I apprehend the queſtion may be eaſily anſwered. For nothing can be more clear, than that Taſte is not reſolvable into any ſuch operation of Reaſon. It is not merely through a diſcovery of the underſtanding or a deduction of argument, that the mind receives pleaſure from a beautiful proſpect or a fine poem. Such

objects

objects often ſtrike us intuitively, and make a ſtrong impreſſion, when we are unable to aſſign the reaſons of our being pleaſed. They ſometimes ſtrike in the ſame manner the philoſopher and the peaſant; the boy and the man. Hence the faculty by which we reliſh ſuch beauties, ſeems more akin to a feeling of ſenſe, than to a proceſs of the underſtanding; and accordingly from an external ſenſe it has borrowed its name; that ſenſe by which we receive and diſtinguiſh the pleaſures of food having, in ſeveral languages, given riſe to the word Taſte, in the metaphorical meaning under which we now conſider it. However, as in all ſubjects which regard the operations of the mind, the inaccurate uſe of words is to be carefully avoided, it muſt not be inferred from what I have ſaid, that reaſon is excluded from the exertions of Taſte. Though Taſte, beyond doubt, be ultimately founded on a certain natural and inſtinctive ſenſibility to beauty, yet reaſon, as I ſhall ſhew hereafter, aſſiſts Taſte in many of its operations, and ſerves to enlarge its power.*

Taſte, in the ſenſe in which I have explained it, is a faculty common in ſome degree to all men. Nothing that belongs to human nature is more univerſal than the reliſh of beauty of one kind or other; of what is orderly, proportioned, grand, harmonious, new, or ſprightly. In children, the rudiments of Taſte diſcover themſelves very early in a thouſand inſtances; in their fondneſs for regular bodies, their admiration of pictures and ſtatues, and imitations of all kinds; and their ſtrong attachment to whatever is new or marvellous. The moſt ignorant peaſants are delighted with ballads and tales, and are ſtruck with the beautiful appearances of nature in the earth and heavens. Even in the deſerts of America, where human nature ſhews itſelf in its moſt uncultivated ſtate, the ſavages have their ornaments of dreſs, their war and their death ſongs, their harangues, and their orators. We muſt therefore conclude the principles of Taſte to be deeply founded in the human mind.

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* See Dr. Gerard's Eſſay on Taſte.—D'Alembert's Reflections on the uſe and abuſe of philoſophy in matters which relate to Taſte.—Reflexions Critiques ſur la poëſie et ſur la peinture, Tom. II. ch. 22—31. Elements of Criticiſm, chap. 25.—Mr. Hume's Eſſay on the Standard of Taſte.—Introduction to the Eſſay on the Sublime and Beautiful.

It is no leſs eſſential to man to have ſome diſcernment of beauty, than it is to poſſeſs the attributes of reaſon and of ſpeech.*

But although none be wholly devoid of this faculty, yet the degrees in which it is poſſeſſed are widely different. In ſome men only the feeble glimmerings of Taſte appear; the beauties which they reliſh are of the coarſeſt kind; and of theſe they have but a weak and confuſed impreſſion; while in others, Taſte riſes to an acute diſcernment, and a lively enjoyment of the moſt refined beauties. In general, we may obſerve, that in the powers and pleaſures of Taſte, there is a more remarkable inequality among men than is uſually found in point of common ſenſe, reaſon, and judgment. The conſtitution of our nature in this, as in all other reſpects, diſcovers admirable wiſdom. In the diſtribution of thoſe talents which are neceſſary for man's well-being, Nature hath made leſs diſtinction among her children. But in the diſtribution of thoſe which belong only to the ornamental part of life, ſhe hath beſtowed her favours with more frugality. She hath both ſown the ſeeds more ſparingly; and rendered a higher culture requiſite for bringing them to perfection.

This inequality of Taſte among men is owing, without doubt, in part, to the different frame of their natures; to nicer organs, and finer internal powers, with which ſome are endowed beyond others. But, if it be owing in part to nature, it is owing

* On the ſubject of Taſte conſidered as a power or faculty of the mind, much leſs is to be found among the ancient, than among the modern rhetorical and critical writers. The following remarkable paſſage in Cicero ſerves, however, to ſhew, that his ideas on this ſubject agree perfectly with what has been ſaid above. He is ſpeaking of the beauties of ſtyle and numbers. "Illud autem "nequis admiretur quonam modo hæc vulgus imperitorum in audiendo, notet; "cum in omni genere, tum in hoc ipſo, magna quædam eſt vis, incredibiliſque "naturæ. Omnes enim tacito quodam ſenſu, ſine ullâ arte aut ratione, quæ "ſint in artibus de rationibus recta et prava dijudicant: idque cum faciunt "in picturis, et in ſignis, et in aliis operibus, ad quorum intelligentiam a naturâ "minus habent inſtrumenti, tum multo oſtendunt magis in verborum, numerorum, vocumque judicio; quod ea ſunt in communibus infixa ſenſibus; neque "earum rerum quenquam funditus natura voluit eſſe expertem." Cic. de Orat. lib. iii. cap. 50. Edit. Gruteri.——Quinctilian ſeems to include Taſte (for which, in the ſenſe which we now give to that word, the ancients appear to have had no diſtinct name) under which he calls judicium. "Loeus de judicio, meâ "quidem opinione adeo partibus hujus operis omnibus connectus ac miſtus eſt, "ut ne a ſententiis quidem aut verbis ſaltem ſingulis poſſit ſeparari, nec magis "arte traditur quam guſtus aut odor.——Ut contraria vitemus et communia, "ne quid in eloquendo corruptum obſcurumque ſit, referatur oportet ad ſenſus qui non docentur." Inſtitut. lib. vi. cap. 3. Edit. Obrechti.

ing to education and culture ſtill more. The illuſtration of this leads to my next remark on this ſubject, that Taſte is a moſt improveable faculty, if there be any ſuch in human nature; a remark which gives great encouragement to ſuch a courſe of ſtudy as we are now propoſing to purſue. Of the truth of this aſſertion we may eaſily be convinced, by only reflecting on that immenſe ſuperiority which education and improvement give to civilized, above barbarous nations, in refinement of Taſte; and on the ſuperiority which they give in the ſame nation to thoſe who have ſtudied the liberal arts, above the rude and untaught vulgar. The difference is ſo great, that there is perhaps no one particular in which theſe two claſſes of men are ſo far removed from each other, as in reſpect of the powers and the pleaſures of Taſte: and aſſuredly for this difference no other general cauſe can be aſſigned, but culture and education. I ſhall now proceed to ſhew what the means are by which Taſte becomes ſo remarkably ſuſceptible of cultivation and progreſs.

Reflect firſt upon that great law of our nature, that exerciſe is the chief ſource of improvement in all our faculties. This holds both in our bodily, and in our mental powers. It holds even in our external ſenſes; although theſe be leſs the ſubject of cultivation than any of our other faculties. We ſee how acute the ſenſes become in perſons whoſe trade or buſineſs leads to nice exertions of them. Touch, for inſtance, becomes infinitely more exquiſite in men whoſe employment requires them to examine the poliſh of bodies, than it is in others. They who deal in microſcopical obſervations, or are accuſtomed to engrave on precious ſtones, acquire ſurpriſing accuracy of ſight in diſcerning the minuteſt objects; and practice in attending to different flavours and taſtes of liquors, wonderfully improves the power of diſtinguiſhing them, and of tracing their compoſition. Placing internal Taſte therefore on the footing of a ſimple ſenſe, it cannot be doubted that frequent exerciſe, and curious attention to its proper objects, muſt greatly heighten its power. Of this we have one clear proof in that part of Taſte, which is called an ear for muſic. Experience every day ſhews, that nothing is more improveable. Only the ſimpleſt and plaineſt compoſitions are reliſhed at firſt; uſe and practice extend our pleaſure; teach us to reliſh finer melody, and by de-

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grees enable us to enter into the intricate and compounded pleaſures of harmony. So an eye for the beauties of painting is never all at once acquired. It is gradually formed by being converſant among pictures, and ſtudying the works of the beſt maſters.

Preciſely in the ſame manner, with reſpect to the beauty of compoſition and diſcourſe, attention to the moſt approved models, ſtudy of the beſt authors, compariſons of lower and higher degrees of the ſame beauties, operate towards the refinement of Taſte. When one is only beginning his acquaintance with works of genius, the ſentiment which attends them is obſcure and confuſed. He cannot point out the ſeveral excellencies or blemiſhes of a performance which he peruſes; he is at a loſs on what to reſt his judgment; all that can be expected is, that he ſhould tell in general whether he be pleaſed or not. But allow him more experience in works of this kind, and his Taſte becomes by degrees more exact and enlightened. He begins to perceive not only the character of the whole, but the beauties and defects of each part; and is able to deſcribe the peculiar qualities which he praiſes or blames. The miſt diſſipates which ſeemed formerly to hang over the object; and he can at length pronounce firmly, and without heſitation, concerning it. Thus in Taſte, conſidered as mere ſenſibility, exerciſe opens a great ſource of improvement.

But although Taſte be ultimately founded on ſenſibility, it muſt not be conſidered as inſtinctive ſenſibility alone. Reaſon and good ſenſe, as I before hinted, have ſo extenſive an influence on all the operations and deciſions of Taſte, that a thorough good Taſte may well be conſidered as a power compounded of natural ſenſibility to beauty, and of improved underſtanding. In order to be ſatisfied of this, let us obſerve, that the greater part of the productions of genius are no other than imitations of nature; repreſentations of the characters, actions, or manners of men. The pleaſure we receive from ſuch imitations or repreſentations is founded on mere Taſte: but to judge whether they be properly executed, belongs to the underſtanding, which compares the copy with the original.

In reading, for inſtance, ſuch a poem as the Æneid, a great part of our pleaſure ariſes from the plan or ſtory being well conducted, and all the parts joined together with probability and due

due connexion: from the characters being taken from nature, the ſentiments being ſuited to the characters, and the ſtyle to the ſentiments. The pleaſure which ariſes from a poem ſo conducted, is felt or enjoyed by Taſte as an internal ſenſe; but the diſcovery of this conduct in the poem is owing to reaſon; and the more that reaſon enables us to diſcover ſuch propriety in the conduct, the greater will be our pleaſure. We are pleaſed, through our natural ſenſe of beauty. Reaſon ſhews us why, and upon what grounds, we are pleaſed. Wherever in works of Taſte, any reſemblance to nature is aimed at; wherever there is any reference of parts to a whole, or of means to an end, as there is indeed in almoſt every writing and diſcourſe, there the underſtanding muſt always have a great part to act.

Here then is a wide field for reaſon's exerting its powers in relation to the objects of Taſte, particularly with reſpect to compoſition, and works of genius; and hence ariſes a ſecond and a very conſiderable ſource of the improvement of Taſte, from the application of reaſon and good ſenſe to ſuch productions of genius. Spurious beauties, ſuch as unnatural characters, forced ſentiments, affected ſtyle, may pleaſe for a little; but they pleaſe only becauſe their oppoſition to nature and to good ſenſe has not been examined, or attended to. Once ſhew how nature might have been more juſtly imitated or repreſented; how the writer might have managed his ſubject to greater advantage; the illuſion will preſently be diſſipated, and thoſe falſe beauties will pleaſe no more.

From theſe two ſources then, firſt, the frequent exerciſe of Taſte, and next the application of good ſenſe and reaſon to the objects of Taſte, Taſte as a power of the mind receives its improvement. In its perfect ſtate, it is undoubtedly the reſult both of nature and of art. It ſuppoſes our natural ſenſe of beauty to be refined by frequent attention to the moſt beautiful objects, and at the ſame time to be guided and improved by the light of the underſtanding.

I muſt be allowed to add, that as a ſound head, ſo likewiſe a good heart, is a very material requiſite to juſt Taſte. The moral beauties are not only in themſelves ſuperior to all others, but they exert an influence, either more near, or more remote, on a great variety of other objects of Taſte. Wherever the affections,

affections, characters, or actions of men are concerned, (and these certainly afford the noblest subjects to genius) there can be neither any just or affecting description of them, nor any thorough feeling of the beauty of that description, without our possessing the virtuous affections. He whose heart is indelicate or hard, he who has no admiration of what is truly noble or praiseworthy, nor the proper sympathetic sense of what is soft and tender, must have a very imperfect relish of the highest beauties of eloquence and poetry.

The characters of Taste when brought to its most perfect state, are all reducible to two, Delicacy and Correctness.

Delicacy of Taste respects principally the perfection of that natural sensibility on which Taste is founded. It implies those finer organs or powers which enable us to discover beauties that lie hid from a vulgar eye. One may have strong sensibility, and yet be deficient in delicate Taste. He may be deeply impressed by such beauties as he perceives; but he perceives only what is in some degree coarse, what is bold and palpable; while chaster and simpler ornaments escape his notice. In this state, Taste generally exists among rude and unrefined nations. But a person of delicate Taste both feels strongly, and feels accurately. He sees distinctions and differences where others see none; the most latent beauty does not escape him, and he is sensible of the smallest blemish. Delicacy of Taste is judged of by the same marks that we use in judging of the delicacy of an external sense. As the goodness of the palate is not tried by strong flavours, but by a mixture of ingredients, where, notwithstanding the confusion, we remain sensible of each; in like manner delicacy of internal Taste appears, by a quick and lively sensibility to its finest, most compounded, or most latent objects.

Correctness of Taste respects chiefly the improvement which that faculty receives through its connexion with the understanding. A man of correct Taste is one who is never imposed on by counterfeit beauties; who carries always in his mind that standard of good sense which he employs in judging of every thing. He estimates with propriety the comparative merit of the several beauties which he meets with in any work of genius; refers them to their proper classes; assigns the principles, as far as they can be traced, whence their power of pleasing

flows; and is pleaſed himſelf precifely in that degree in which he ought, and no more.

It is true, that theſe two qualities of Taſte, Delicacy and Correctneſs, mutually imply each other. No Taſte can be exquiſitely delicate without being correct; nor can be thoroughly correct without being delicate. But ſtill a predominancy of one or other quality in the mixture is often viſible. The power of Delicacy is chiefly ſeen in diſcerning the true merit of a work; the power of Correctneſs, in rejecting falſe pretenſions to merit. Delicacy leans more to feeling; Correctneſs, more to reaſon and judgment. The former is more the gift of nature; the latter, more the product of culture and art. Among the ancient critics, Longinus poſſeſſed moſt Delicacy; Ariſtotle, moſt Correctneſs. Among the moderns, Mr. Addiſon is a high example of delicate Taſte: Dean Swift, had he written on the ſubject of criticiſm, would perhaps have afforded the example of a correct one.

Having viewed Taſte in its moſt improved and perfect ſtate, I come next to conſider its deviations from that ſtate, the fluctuations and changes to which it is liable; and to inquire whether, in the midſt of theſe, there be any means of diſtinguiſhing a true from a corrupted Taſte. This brings us to the moſt difficult part of our taſk. For it muſt be acknowledged, that no principle of the human mind is, in its operations, more fluctuating and capricious than Taſte. Its variations have been ſo great and frequent, as to create a ſuſpicion with ſome, of its being merely arbitrary; grounded on no foundation, aſcertainable by no ſtandard, but wholly dependent on changing fancy; the conſequence of which would be, that all ſtudies or regular inquiries concerning the objects of Taſte were vain. In architecture, the Grecian models were long eſteemed the moſt perfect. In ſucceeding ages, the Gothic architecture alone prevailed, and afterwards the Grecian Taſte revived in all its vigour, and engroſſed the public admiration. In eloquence and poetry, the Aſiatics at no time reliſhed any thing but what was full of ornament, and ſplendid in a degree that we would denominate gawdy; whilſt the Greeks admired only chaſte and ſimple beauties, and deſpiſed the Aſiatic oſtentation. In our own country, how many writings that were greatly extolled two or three centuries ago, are now fallen into entire diſrepute and oblivion?

oblivion? Without going back to remote inſtances, how very different is the Taſte of poetry which prevails in Great Britain now, from what prevailed there no longer ago than the reign of king Charles II. which the authors too of that time deemed an Auguſtan age: when nothing was in vogue but an affected brilliancy of wit; when the ſimple majeſty of Milton was overlooked, and Paradiſe Loſt almoſt entirely unknown; when Cowley's laboured and unnatural conceits were admired as the very quinteſſence of genius; Waller's gay ſprightlineſs was miſtaken for the tender ſpirit of Love poetry; and ſuch writers as Suckling and Etheridge were held in eſteem for dramatic compoſition?

The queſtion is, what concluſion we are to form from ſuch inſtances as theſe? Is there any thing that can be called a ſtandard of Taſte, by appealing to which we may diſtinguiſh between a good and a bad Taſte? Or, is there in truth no ſuch diſtinction; and are we to hold that, according to the proverb, there is no diſputing of Taſtes; but that whatever pleaſes is right, for that reaſon that it does pleaſe? This is the queſtion, and a very nice and ſubtile one it is, which we are now to diſcuſs.

I begin by obſerving, that if there be no ſuch thing as any ſtandard of Taſte, this conſequence muſt immediately follow, that all Taſtes are equally good; a poſition, which, though it may paſs unnoticed in ſlight matters, and when we ſpeak of the leſſer differences among the Taſtes of men, yet when we apply it to the extremes, its abſurdity becomes glaring. For is there any one who will ſeriouſly maintain that the Taſte of a Hottentot or a Laplander is as delicate and as correct as that of a Longinus or an Addiſon? or, that he can be charged with no defect or incapacity who thinks a common news-writer as excellent an hiſtorian as Tacitus? As it would be held downright extravagance to talk in this manner, we are led unavoidably to this concluſion, that there is ſome foundation for the preference of one man's Taſte to that of another; or, that there is a good and a bad, right and a wrong in Taſte, as in other things.

But to prevent miſtakes on this ſubject, it is neceſſary to obſerve next, that the diverſity of Taſtes which prevails among mankind, does not in every caſe infer corruption of Taſte, or oblige us to ſeek for ſome ſtandard in order to determine who

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are in the right. The Taſtes of men may differ very conſiderably as to their object, and yet none of them be wrong. One man reliſhes poetry moſt; another takes pleaſure in nothing but hiſtory. One prefers comedy; another, tragedy. One admires the ſimple; another, the ornamented ſtyle. The young are amuſed with gay and ſprightly compoſitions. The elderly are more entertained with thoſe of a graver caſt. Some nations delight in bold pictures of manners, and ſtrong repreſentations of paſſion. Others incline to more correct and regular elegance both in deſcription and ſentiment. Though all differ, yet all pitch upon ſome one beauty which peculiarly ſuits their turn of mind; and therefore no one has a title to condemn the reſt. It is not in matters of Taſte, as in queſtions of mere reaſon, where there is but one concluſion that can be true, and all the reſt are erroneous. Truth, which is the object of reaſon, is one; beauty, which is the object of Taſte, is manifold. Taſte therefore admits of latitude and diverſity of objects, in ſufficient conſiſtency with goodneſs or juſtneſs of Taſte.

But then, to explain this matter thoroughly, I muſt obſerve farther, that this admiſſible diverſity of Taſtes can only have place where the objects of Taſte are different. Where it is with reſpect to the ſame object that men diſagree, when one condemns that as ugly, which another admires as highly beautiful; then it is no longer diverſity, but direct oppoſition of Taſte that takes place; and therefore one muſt be in the right, and another in the wrong, unleſs that abſurd paradox were allowed to hold, that all Taſtes are equally good and true. One man prefers Virgil to Homer. Suppoſe that I, on the other hand, admire Homer more than Virgil. I have as yet no reaſon to ſay that our Taſtes are contradictory. The other perſon is moſt ſtruck with the elegance and tenderneſs which are the characteriſtics of Virgil; I, with the ſimplicity and fire of Homer. As long as neither of us deny that both Homer and Virgil have great beauties, our difference falls within the compaſs of that diverſity of Taſtes, which I have ſhewn to be natural and allowable. But if the other man ſhall aſſert that Homer has no beauties whatever; that he holds him to be a dull and ſpiritleſs writer, and that he would as ſoon peruſe any old legend of Knight-Errantry as the Iliad; then I exclaim, that my antag-

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oniſt either is void of all Taſte, or that his Taſte is corrupted in a miſerable degree; and I appeal to whatever I think the ſtandard of Taſte, to ſhew him that he is in the wrong.

What that ſtandard is, to which, in ſuch oppoſition of Taſtes, we are obliged to have recourſe, remains to be traced. A ſtandard properly ſignifies, that which is of ſuch undoubted authority as to be the teſt of other things of the ſame kind. Thus a ſtandard weight or meaſure, is that which is appointed by law to regulate all other meaſures and weights. Thus the court is ſaid to be the ſtandard of good breeding; and the ſcripture, of theological truth.

When we ſay that nature is the ſtandard of Taſte, we lay down a principle very true and juſt, as far as it can be applied. There is no doubt, that in all caſes where an imitation is intended of ſome object that exiſts in nature, as in repreſenting human characters or actions, conformity to nature affords a full and diſtinct criterion of what is truly beautiful. Reaſon hath in ſuch caſes full ſcope for exerting its authority; for approving or condemning; by comparing the copy with the original. But there are innumerable caſes in which this rule cannot be at all applied; and conformity to nature, is an expreſſion frequently uſed, without any diſtinct or determinate meaning. We muſt therefore ſearch for ſomewhat that can be rendered more clear and preciſe, to be the ſtandard of Taſte.

Taſte, as I before explained it, is ultimately founded on an internal ſenſe of beauty, which is natural to men, and which, in its application to particular objects, is capable of being guided and enlightened by reaſon. Now, were there any one perſon who poſſeſſed in full perfection all the powers of human nature, whoſe internal ſenſes were in every inſtance exquiſite and juſt, and whoſe reaſon was unerring and ſure, the determinations of ſuch a perſon concerning beauty, would, beyond doubt, be a perfect ſtandard for the Taſte of all others. Wherever their Taſte differed from his, it could be imputed only to ſome imperfection in their natural powers. But as there is no ſuch living ſtandard, no one perſon to whom all mankind will allow ſuch ſubmiſſion to be due, what is there of ſufficient authority to be the ſtandard of the various and oppoſite Taſtes of men? Moſt certainly there is nothing but the Taſte, as far as it can be gathered, of human nature. That

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which men concur the moſt in admiring, muſt be held to be beautiful. His Taſte muſt be eſteemed juſt and true, which coincides with the general ſentiments of men. In this ſtandard we muſt reſt. To the ſenſe of mankind the ultimate appeal muſt ever lie, in all works of Taſte. If any one ſhould maintain that ſugar was bitter and tobacco was ſweet, no reaſonings could avail to prove it. The Taſte of ſuch a perſon would infallibly be held to be diſeaſed, merely becauſe it differed ſo widely from the Taſte of the ſpecies to which he belongs. In like manner, with regard to the objects of ſentiment or internal Taſte, the common feelings of men carry the ſame authority, and have a title to regulate the Taſte of every individual.

But have we then, it will be ſaid, no other criterion of what is beautiful, than the approbation of the majority? Muſt we collect the voices of others, before we form any judgment for ourſelves, of what deſerves applauſe in Eloquence or Poetry? By no means: there are principles of reaſon and ſound judgment which can be applied to matters of Taſte, as well as to the ſubjects of ſcience and philoſophy. He who admires or cenſures any work of genius, is always ready, if his Taſte be in any degree improved, to aſſign ſome reaſons of his deciſion. He appeals to principles, and points out the grounds on which he proceeds. Taſte is a ſort of compound power, in which the light of the underſtanding always mingles, more or leſs, with the feelings of ſentiment.

But, though reaſon can carry us a certain length in judging concerning works of Taſte, it is not to be forgotten that the ultimate concluſions to which our reaſonings lead, refer at laſt to ſenſe and perception. We may ſpeculate and argue concerning propriety of conduct in a tragedy, or an Epic poem. Juſt reaſonings on the ſubject will correct the caprice of unenlightened Taſte, and eſtabliſh principles for judging of what deſerves praiſe. But, at the ſame time, theſe reaſonings appeal always, in the laſt reſort, to feeling. The foundation upon which they reſt, is what has been found from experience to pleaſe mankind moſt univerſally. Upon this ground we prefer a ſimple and natural, to an artificial and affected ſtyle; a regular and well connected ſtory, to looſe and ſcattered narratives; a cataſtrophe which is tender and pathetic, to one which leaves us unmoved. It is from conſulting our own imagination and heart,

heart, and from attending to the feelings of others, that any principles are formed which acquire authority in matters of Taſte.*

When we refer to the concurring ſentiments of men as the ultimate teſt of what is to be accounted beautiful in the arts, this is to be always underſtood of men placed in ſuch ſituations as are favourable to the proper exertions of Taſte. Every one muſt perceive, that among rude and uncivilized nations, and during the ages of ignorance and darkneſs, any looſe notions that are entertained concerning ſuch ſubjects, carry no authority. In thoſe ſtates of ſociety, Taſte has no materials on which to operate. It is either totally ſuppreſſed, or appears in its loweſt and moſt imperfect form. We refer to the ſentiments of mankind in poliſhed and flouriſhing nations; when arts are cultivated and manners refined; when works of genius are ſubjected to free diſcuſſion, and Taſte is improved by Science and Philoſophy.

Even among nations, at ſuch a period of ſociety, I admit, that accidental cauſes may occaſionally warp the proper operations of Taſte; ſometimes the ſtate of religion, ſometimes the form of government, may for a while pervert it; a licentious court may introduce a Taſte for falſe ornaments, and diſſolute writings. The uſage of one admired genius may procure approbation for his faults, and even render them faſhionable. Sometimes envy may have power to bear down, for a little, productions of great merit; while popular humour, or party

* The difference between the authors who found the ſtandard of Taſte upon the common feelings of human nature aſcertained by general approbation, and thoſe who found it upon eſtabliſhed principles which can be aſcertained by reaſon, is more an apparent than a real difference. Like many other literary controverſies, it turns chiefly on modes of expreſſion. For they who lay the greateſt ſtreſs on ſentiment and feeling, make no ſcruple of applying argument and reaſon to matters of Taſte. They appeal, like other writers, to eſtabliſhed principles, in judging of the excellencies of Eloquence or Poetry; and plainly ſhew, that the general approbation to which they ultimately recur, is an approbation reſulting from diſcuſſion as well as from ſentiment. They, on the other hand, who, in order to vindicate Taſte from any ſuſpicion of being arbitrary, maintain that it is aſcertainable by the ſtandard of reaſon, admit, nevertheleſs, that what pleaſes univerſally, muſt on that account be held to be truly beautiful; and that no rules or concluſions concerning objects of Taſte, can have any juſt authority, if they be found to contradict the general ſentiments of men. Theſe two ſyſtems, therefore, differ in reality very little from one another. Sentiment and reaſon enter into both; and by allowing to each of theſe powers its due place, both ſyſtems may be rendered conſiſtent. Accordingly, it is in this light that I have endeavoured to place the ſubject.

party ſpirit, may, at other times, exalt to a high, though ſhort-lived reputation, what little deſerved it. But though ſuch caſual circumſtances give the appearance of caprice to the judgments of Taſte, that appearance is eaſily corrected. In the courſe of time, the genuine Taſte of human nature never fails to diſcloſe itſelf, and to gain the aſcendant over any fantaſtic and corrupted modes of Taſte which may chance to have been introduced. Theſe may have currency for a while, and miſlead ſuperficial judges; but being ſubjected to examination, by degrees they paſs away; while that alone remains which is founded on ſound reaſon, and the native feelings of men.

I by no means pretend, that there is any ſtandard of Taſte, to which, in every particular inſtance, we can reſort for clear and immediate determination. Where, indeed, is ſuch a ſtandard to be found for deciding any of thoſe great controverſies in reaſon and philoſophy, which perpetually divide mankind? In the preſent caſe, there was plainly no occaſion for any ſuch ſtrict and abſolute proviſion to be made. In order to judge of what is morally good or evil, of what man ought, or ought not in duty to do, it was fit that the means of clear and preciſe determination ſhould be afforded us. But to aſcertain in every caſe with the utmoſt exactneſs what is beautiful or elegant, was not at all neceſſary to the happineſs of man. And therefore ſome diverſity in feeling was here allowed to take place; and room was left for diſcuſſion and debate, concerning the degree of approbation to which any work of genius is entitled.

The concluſion, which it is ſufficient for us to reſt upon, is, that Taſte is far from being an arbitrary principle, which is ſubject to the fancy of every individual, and which admits of no criterion for determining whether it be falſe or true. Its foundation is the ſame in all human minds. It is built upon ſentiments and perceptions which belong to our nature; and which, in general, operate with the ſame uniformity as our other intellectual principles. When theſe ſentiments are perverted by ignorance and prejudice, they are capable of being rectified by reaſon. Their ſound and natural ſtate is ultimately determined, by comparing them with the general Taſte of mankind. Let men declaim as much as they pleaſe, concerning the caprice and the uncertainty of Taſte, it is found, by experience,

experience, that there are beauties, which, if they be displayed in a proper light, have power to command lasting and general admiration. In every composition, what interests the imagination, and touches the heart, pleases all ages and all nations. There is a certain string, which, being properly struck, the human heart is so made as to answer it.

Hence the universal testimony which the most improved nations of the earth have conspired, throughout a long tract of ages, to give to some few works of genius; such as the Iliad of Homer, and the Æneid of Virgil. Hence the authority which such works have acquired, as standards in some degree of poetical composition; since from them we are enabled to collect what the sense of mankind is, concerning those beauties which give them the highest pleasure, and which therefore poetry ought to exhibit. Authority or prejudice may, in one age or country, give a temporary reputation to an indifferent poet or a bad artist; but when foreigners, or when posterity examine his works, his faults are discerned, and the genuine Taste of human nature appears. "Opinionum commenta delet dies; "naturæ judicia confirmat." Time overthrows the illusions of opinion, but establishes the decisions of nature.

LECTURE III.

CRITICISM. GENIUS. PLEASURES OF TASTE. SUBLIMITY IN OBJECTS.

TASTE, Criticiſm, and Genius, are words currently employed, without diſtinct ideas annexed to them. In beginning a courſe of Lectures where ſuch words muſt often occur, it is neceſſary to aſcertain their meaning with ſome preciſion. Having in the laſt Lecture treated of Taſte, I proceed to explain the nature and foundation of Criticiſm. (True Criticiſm is the application of Taſte and of good ſenſe to the ſeveral fine arts. The object which it propoſes is, to diſtinguiſh what is beautiful and what is faulty in every performance; from particular inſtances to aſcend to general principles; and ſo to form rules or concluſions concerning the ſeveral kinds of beauty in works of genius.)

The rules of Criticiſm are not formed by any induction, *à priori*, as it is called; that is, they are not formed by a train of abſtract reaſoning, independent of facts and obſervations. (Criticiſm is an art founded wholly on experience; on the obſervation of ſuch beauties as have come neareſt to the ſtandard which I before eſtabliſhed: that is, of ſuch beauties as have been found to pleaſe mankind moſt generally. For example; Ariſtotle's rules concerning the unity of action in dramatic and epic compoſition, were not rules firſt diſcovered by logical reaſoning, and then applied to poetry; but they were drawn from the practice of Homer and Sophocles: they were founded upon obſerving the ſuperior pleaſure which we receive from the relation of an action which is one and entire, beyond what we receive from the relation of ſcattered and unconnected facts.) Such obſervations taking their riſe at firſt from feeling and experience, were found on examination to be ſo conſonant to reaſon, and

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to the principles of human nature, as to pass into established rules, and to be conveniently applied for judging of the excellency of any performance. This is the most natural account of the origin of Criticism.

(A masterly genius, it is true, will of himself, untaught, compose in such a manner as shall be agreeable to the most material rules of Criticism; for as these rules are founded in nature, nature will often suggest them in practice.) Homer, it is more than probable, was acquainted with no systems of the art of poetry. Guided by genius alone, he composed in verse a regular story, which all posterity has admired. But this is no argument against the usefulness of Criticism as an art. For as no human genius is perfect, there is no writer but may receive assistance from critical observations upon the beauties and faults of those who have gone before him. No observations or rules can indeed supply the defect of genius, or inspire it where it is wanting. But they may often direct it into its proper channel; they may correct its extravagancies, and point out to it the most just and proper imitation of nature. Critical rules are designed chiefly to shew the faults that ought to be avoided. To nature we must be indebted for the production of eminent beauties.)

From what has been said, we are enabled to form a judgment concerning those complaints which it has long been fashionable for petty authors to make against Critics and Criticism. Critics have been represented as the great abridgers of the native liberty of genius; as the imposers of unnatural shackles and bonds upon writers, from whose cruel persecution they must fly to the public, and implore its protection. Such supplicatory prefaces are not calculated to give very favourable ideas of the genius of the author. For every good writer will be pleased to have his work examined by the principles of sound understanding and true Taste. The declamations against Criticism commonly proceed upon this supposition, that Critics are such as judge by rule, not by feeling; which is so far from being true, that they who judge after this manner are pedants, not Critics. For all the rules of genuine Criticism I have shewn to be ultimately founded on feeling; and Taste and Feeling are necessary to guide us in the application of these rules to every particular instance. As there

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in nothing in which all sorts of persons more readily affect to be judges than in works of Taste, there is no doubt that the number of incompetent Critics will always be great. But this affords no more foundation for a general invective against Criticism, than the number of bad philosophers or reasoners affords against reason and philosophy.

An objection more plausible may be formed against Criticism, from the applause that some performances have received from the public, which, when accurately considered, are found to contradict the rules established by Criticism. Now, according to the principles laid down in the last Lecture, the public is the supreme judge to whom the last appeal must be made in every work of Taste; as the standard of Taste is founded on the sentiments that are natural and common to all men. But with respect to this, we are to observe, that the sense of the public is often too hastily judged of. The genuine public Taste does not always appear in the first applause given upon the publication of any new work. There are both a great vulgar and a small, apt to be catched and dazzled by very superficial beauties, the admiration of which in a little time passes away: and sometimes a writer may acquire great temporary reputation merely by his compliance with the passions or prejudices, with the party-spirit or superstitious notions that may chance to rule for a time almost a whole nation. In such cases, though the public may seem to praise, true Criticism may with reason condemn; and it will in progress of time gain the ascendant: for the judgment of true Criticism, and the voice of the public when once become unprejudiced and dispassionate, will ever coincide at last.

Instances, I admit, there are, of some works that contain gross transgressions of the laws of Criticism, acquiring, nevertheless, a general, and even a lasting admiration. Such are the Plays of Shakespeare, which, considered as dramatic poems, are irregular in the highest degree. But then we are to remark, that they have gained the public admiration, not by their being irregular, not by their transgressions of the rules of art, but in spite of such transgressions. They possess other beauties which are conformable to just rules; and the force of these beauties has been so great as to overpower all censure, and to

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give the public a degree of ſatisfaction ſuperior to the diſguſt ariſing from their blemiſhes. Shakeſpeare pleaſes, not by his bringing the tranſactions of many years into one play; not by his groteſque mixtures of tragedy and comedy in one piece, nor by the ſtrained thoughts, and affected witticiſms, which he ſometimes employs. Theſe we conſider as blemiſhes, and impute them to the groſſneſs of the age in which he lived. But he pleaſes by his animated and maſterly repreſentations of characters, by the livelineſs of his deſcriptions, the force of his ſentiments, and his poſſeſſing, beyond all writers, the natural language of paſſion: Beauties which true Criticiſm no leſs teaches us to place in the higheſt rank, than nature teaches us to feel. This much it may ſuffice to have ſaid concerning the origin, office, and importance of Criticiſm.

I proceed next to explain the meaning of another term, which there will be frequent occaſion to employ in theſe Lectures; that is, *Genius*.

Taſte and Genius are two words frequently joined together; and therefore, by inaccurate thinkers, confounded. They ſignify, however, two quite different things. The difference between them can be clearly pointed out; and it is of importance to remember it. Taſte conſiſts in the power of judging. Genius, in the power of executing. One may have a conſiderable degree of Taſte in poetry, eloquence, or any of the fine arts, who has little or hardly any Genius for compoſition or execution in any of theſe arts: But Genius cannot be found without including Taſte alſo. Genius, therefore, deſerves to be conſidered as a higher power of the mind than Taſte. Genius always imports ſomething inventive or creative; which does not reſt in mere ſenſibility to beauty where it is perceived, but which can, moreover, produce new beauties, and exhibit them in ſuch a manner as ſtrongly to impreſs the minds of others. Refined Taſte forms a good critic; but Genius is farther neceſſary to form the poet, or the orator.

It is proper alſo to obſerve, that Genius is a word, which, in common acceptation, extends much farther than to the objects of Taſte. It is uſed to ſignify that talent or aptitude which we receive from nature, for excelling in any one thing whatever. Thus we ſpeak of a Genius for mathematics, as well

well as a Genius for poetry; of a Genius for war, for politics, or for any mechanical employment.

This talent or aptitude for excelling in some one particular, is, I have said, what we receive from nature. By art and study, no doubt, it may be greatly improved; but by them alone it cannot be acquired. As Genius is a higher faculty than Taste, it is ever, according to the usual frugality of nature, more limited in the sphere of its operations. It is not uncommon to meet with persons who have an excellent Taste in several of the polite arts, such as music, poetry, painting, and eloquence, altogether: but, to find one who is an excellent performer in all these arts, is much more rare; or rather, indeed, such an one is not to be looked for. A sort of Universal Genius, or one who is equally and indifferently turned towards several different professions and arts, is not likely to excel in any. Although there may be some few exceptions, yet in general it holds, that when the bent of the mind is wholly directed towards some one object, exclusive in a manner of others, there is the fairest prospect of eminence in that, whatever it be. The rays must converge to a point, in order to glow intensely. This remark I here choose to make, on account of its great importance to young people; in leading them to examine with care, and to pursue with ardour, the current and pointing of nature towards those exertions of Genius in which they are most likely to excel.

A Genius for any of the fine arts, as I before observed, always supposes Taste; and it is clear, that the improvement of Taste will serve both to forward and to correct the operations of Genius. In proportion as the Taste of a poet, or orator, becomes more refined with respect to the beauties of composition, it will certainly assist him to produce the more finished beauties in his work. Genius, however, in a poet, or orator, may sometimes exist in a higher degree than Taste; that is, Genius may be bold and strong, when Taste is neither very delicate, nor very correct. This is often the case in the infancy of arts; a period, when Genius frequently exerts itself with great vigour, and executes with much warmth; while Taste, which requires experience, and improves by slower degrees, hath not yet attained its full growth. Homer and Shakespeare are proofs of what I now assert; in whose admirable writings

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are found inſtances of rudeneſs and indelicacy, which the more refined Taſte of later writers, who had far inferior Genius to them, would have taught them to avoid. As all human perfection is limited, this may very probably be the law of our nature, that it is not given to one man to execute with vigour and fire, and, at the ſame time, to attend to all the leſſer and more refined graces that belong to the exact perfection of his work: while on the other hand, a thorough Taſte for thoſe inferior graces, is, for the moſt part, accompanied with a diminution of ſublimity and force.

Having thus explained the nature of Taſte, the nature and importance of Criticiſm, and the diſtinction between Taſte and Genius; I am now to enter on conſidering the ſources of the Pleaſures of Taſte. Here opens a very extenſive field; no leſs than all the pleaſures of the imagination, as they are commonly called, whether afforded us by natural objects, or by the imitations and deſcriptions of them. But it is not neceſſary to the purpoſe of my Lectures, that all theſe ſhould be examined fully; the pleaſure which we receive from diſcourſe, or writing, being the main object of them. All that I purpoſe is, to give ſome openings into the Pleaſures of Taſte in general; and to inſiſt, more particularly, upon Sublimity and Beauty.

We are far from having yet attained to any ſyſtem concerning this ſubject. Mr. Addiſon was the firſt who attempted a regular inquiry, in his Eſſay on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, publiſhed in the ſixth volume of the Spectator. He has reduced theſe Pleaſures under three heads; Beauty, Grandeur, and Novelty. His ſpeculations on this ſubject, if not exceedingly profound, are, however, very beautiful and entertaining; and he has the merit of having opened a track, which was before unbeaten. The advances made ſince his time in this curious part of Philoſophical Criticiſm, are not very conſiderable; though ſome ingenious writers have purſued the ſubject. This is owing, doubtleſs, to that thinneſs and ſubtilty which are found to be properties of all the feelings of Taſte. They are engaging objects; but when we would lay firm hold of them, and ſubject them to a regular diſcuſſion, they are always ready to elude our graſp. It is difficult to make a full enumeration of the ſeveral objects that give Pleaſure to Taſte; it

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is more difficult to define all thoſe which have been diſcovered, and to reduce them under proper claſſes; and, when we would go farther, and inveſtigate the efficient cauſes of the pleaſure which we receive from ſuch objects, here, above all, we find ourſelves at a loſs. For inſtance; we all learn by experience, that certain figures of bodies appear to us more beautiful than others. On inquiring farther, we find that the regularity of ſome figures, and the graceful variety of others, are the foundation of the beauty which we diſcern in them; but when we attempt to go a ſtep beyond this, and inquire what is the cauſe of regularity and variety producing in our minds the ſenſation of Beauty, any reaſon we can aſſign is extremely imperfect. (Theſe firſt principles of internal ſenſation, nature ſeems to have covered with an impenetrable veil.)

It is ſome comfort, however, that although the efficient cauſe be obſcure, the final cauſe of thoſe ſenſations lies in many caſes more open: and in entering on this ſubject, we cannot avoid taking notice of the ſtrong impreſſion which the powers of Taſte and Imagination are calculated to give us of the benignity of our Creator. By endowing us with ſuch powers, he hath widely enlarged the ſphere of the pleaſures of human life; and thoſe, too, of a kind the moſt pure and innocent. The neceſſary purpoſes of life might have been abundantly anſwered, though our ſenſes of ſeeing and hearing had only ſerved to diſtinguiſh external objects, without conveying to us any of thoſe refined and delicate ſenſations of Beauty and Grandeur, with which we are now ſo much delighted. This additional embelliſhment and glory, which, for promoting our entertainment, the Author of nature hath poured forth upon his works, is one ſtriking teſtimony, among many others, of benevolence and goodneſs. This thought, which Mr. Addiſon firſt ſtarted, Dr. Akenſide, in his Poem on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, has happily purſued.

> ——— Not content
> With every food of life to nouriſh man,
> By kind illuſions of the wondering ſenſe,
> Thou mak'ſt all nature Beauty to his eye,
> Or Muſic to his ear.

I ſhall begin with conſidering the Pleaſure which ariſes from Sublimity or Grandeur, of which I propoſe to treat at ſome length; both, as this has a character more preciſe and diſtinctly

ctly marked, than any other, of the Pleasures of the Imagination, and as it coincides more directly with our main subject. For the greater distinctness I shall, first, treat of the Grandeur or Sublimity of external objects themselves, which will employ the rest of this Lecture; and, afterwards, of the description of such objects, or, of what is called the Sublime in Writing, which shall be the subject of a following Lecture. I distinguish these two things from one another, the Grandeur of the objects themselves when they are presented to the eye, and the description of that Grandeur in discourse or writing; though most Critics, inaccurately I think, blend them together; and I consider Grandeur and Sublimity as terms synonimous, or nearly so. If there be any distinction between them, it arises from Sublimity's expressing Grandeur in its highest degree.*

It is not easy to describe, in words, the precise impression which great and sublime objects make upon us, when we behold them; but every one has a conception of it. It consists in a kind of admiration and expansion of the mind; it raises the mind much above its ordinary state, and fills it with a degree of wonder and astonishment, which it cannot well express. The emotion is certainly delightful; but it is altogether of the serious kind; a degree of awfulness and solemnity, even approaching to severity, commonly attends it when at its height; very distinguishable from the more gay and brisk emotion raised by beautiful objects.

The simplest form of external Grandeur appears in the vast and boundless prospects presented to us by nature; such as wide extended plains, to which the eye can see no limits; the firmament of heaven; or the boundless expanse of the ocean. All vastness produces the impression of Sublimity. It is to be remarked, however, that space extended in length, makes not so strong an impression as height or depth. Though a boundless plain be a grand object, yet a high mountain, to which we look up, or an awful precipice or tower whence we look down on the objects which lie below, is still more so. The excessive Grandeur of the firmament arises from its height, joined to its boundless extent; and that of the ocean, not from its extent alone, but from the perpetual motion and irresistible force of

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* See a Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful. Dr. Gerard on Taste, Section II. Elements of Criticism, Chap. IV.

that mafs of waters. Wherever ſpace is concerned, it is clear, that amplitude or greatneſs of extent, in one dimenſion or other, is neceſſary to Grandeur. Remove all bounds from any object, and you preſently render it ſublime. Hence infinite ſpace, endleſs numbers, and eternal duration, fill the mind with great ideas.)

From this ſome have imagined, that vaſtneſs, or amplitude of extent, is the foundation of all Sublimity. But I cannot be of this opinion, becauſe many objects appear ſublime which have no relation to ſpace at all. Such for inſtance, is great loudneſs of ſound. The burſt of thunder or of cannon, the roaring of winds, the ſhouting of multitudes, the ſound of vaſt cataracts of water, are all inconteſtably grand objects. "I heard the "voice of a great multitude, as the ſound of many waters, and "of mighty thunderings, ſaying Allelujah." In general we may obſerve, that great power and force exerted, always raiſe ſublime ideas: and perhaps the moſt copious ſource of theſe is derived from this quarter. Hence the Grandeur of earthquakes and burning mountains; of great conflagrations; of the ſtormy ocean, and overflowing waters; of tempeſts of wind; of thunder and lightning; and of all the uncommon violence of the elements. Nothing is more ſublime than mighty power and ſtrength. A ſtream that runs within its banks, is a beautiful object, but when it ruſhes down with the impetuoſity and noiſe of a torrent, it preſently becomes a ſublime one. From lions, and other animals of ſtrength, are drawn ſublime compariſons in poets. A race-horſe is looked upon with pleaſure; but it is the war-horſe, "whoſe neck is clothed with thunder," that carries Grandeur in its idea. The engagement of two great armies, as it is the higheſt exertion of human might, combines a variety of ſources of the Sublime; and has accordingly been always conſidered as one of the moſt ſtriking and magnificent ſpectacles that can be either preſented to the eye, or exhibited to the imagination in deſcription.

For the farther illuſtration of this ſubject, it is proper to remark that all ideas of the ſolemn and awful kind, and even bordering on the terrible, tend greatly to aſſiſt the Sublime; ſuch as darkneſs, ſolitude, and ſilence. What are the ſcenes of nature that elevate the mind in the higheſt degree, and produce the ſublime ſenſation? Not the gay landſcape, the flowery field,

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or the flouriſhing city; but the hoary mountain, and the ſolitary lake; the aged foreſt, and the torrent falling over the rock. Hence too, night-ſcenes are commonly the moſt ſublime. The firmament when filled with ſtars, ſcattered in ſuch vaſt numbers, and with ſuch magnificent profuſion, ſtrikes the imagination with a more awful Grandeur, than when we view it enlightened by all the ſplendour of the ſun. The deep ſound of a great bell, or the ſtriking of a great clock, are at any time grand; but, when heard amid the ſilence and ſtillneſs of the night, they become doubly ſo. Darkneſs is very commonly applied for adding ſublimity to all our ideas of the Deity. "He maketh dark-"neſs his pavilion; he dwelleth in the thick cloud." So Milton:

——————— How oft, amidſt
Thick clouds and dark, does heav'n's all-ruling Sire
Chooſe to reſide, his glory unobſcur'd,
And, with the majeſty of darkneſs, round
Circles his throne—— BOOK II. 263.

Obſerve, with how much art Virgil has introduced all thoſe ideas of ſilence, vacuity, and darkneſs, when he is going to introduce his Hero to the infernal regions, and to diſcloſe the ſecrets of the great deep.

Dii, quibus imperium eſt animarum, umbræque ſilentes,
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte ſilentia latè,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui; ſit numine veſtro
Pandere res altâ terrâ, & caligine merſas.
Iban obſcuri, ſola ſub nocte, per umbram,
Perque domos Ditis vacuos, et inania regna;
Quale per incertam lunam, ſub luce maligna,
Eſt iter in ſylvis——.*

Theſe paſſages I quote at preſent, not ſo much as inſtances of Sublime Writing, though in themſelves they truly are ſo, as to ſhew, by the effect of them, that the objects which they preſent to us, belong to the claſs of ſublime ones.

Obſcurity,

* Ye ſubterranean gods, whoſe awful ſway
The gliding ghoſts and ſilent ſhades obey;
O Chaos, hear! and Phlegethon profound!
Whoſe ſolemn empire ſtretches wide around;
Give me, ye great tremendous powers! to tell
Of ſcenes and wonders in the depths of hell;
Give me your mighty ſecrets to diſplay,
From thoſe black realms of darkneſs to the day. PITT.

Obſcure they went; through dreary ſhades, that led
Along the waſte dominions of the dead;
As wander travellers in woods by night,
By the moon's doubtful and malignant light. DRYDEN.

Obſcurity, we are farther to remark, is not unfavourable to the Sublime. Though it render the object indiſtinct, the impreſſion, however, may be great; for, as an ingenious Author has well obſerved, it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination; and the imagination may be ſtrongly affected, and, in fact, often is ſo, by objects of which we have no clear conception. Thus we ſee, that almoſt all the deſcriptions given us of the appearances of ſupernatural beings, carry ſome Sublimity, though the conceptions which they afford us be confuſed and indiſtinct. Their Sublimity ariſes from the ideas, which they always convey, of ſuperior power and might, joined with an awful obſcurity. We may ſee this fully exemplified in the following noble paſſage of the book of Job. "In thoughts from the viſions of the night, "when deep ſleep falleth upon men, fear came upon me, and "trembling, which made all my bones to ſhake. Then a ſpirit "paſſed before my face; the hair of my fleſh ſtood up: it ſtood "ſtill; but I could not diſcern the form thereof; an image "was before mine eyes; there was ſilence; and I heard a "voice—Shall mortal man be more juſt than God?"* (Job iv. 15.) No ideas, it is plain, are ſo ſublime as thoſe taken from the Supreme Being; the moſt unknown, but the greateſt of all objects; the infinity of whoſe nature, and the eternity of whoſe duration, joined with the omnipotence of his power, though they ſurpaſs our conceptions, yet exalt them to the higheſt. In general, all objects that are greatly raiſed above us, or far removed from us, either in ſpace or in time, are apt to ſtrike us as great. Our viewing them, as through the miſt of diſtance or antiquity, is favourable to the impreſſions of their Sublimity.

As obſcurity, ſo diſorder too, is very compatible with Grandeur; nay, frequently heightens it. Few things that are ſtrictly

* The picture which Lucretius has drawn of the dominion of ſuperſtition over mankind, repreſenting it as a portentous ſpectre ſhowing its head from the clouds, and diſmaying the whole human race with its countenance, together with the magnanimity of Epicurus in raiſing himſelf up againſt it, carries all the grandeur of a ſublime, obſcure, and awful image.

Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jaceret
In terris, oppreſſa gravi ſub religione,
Quæ caput a cæli regionibus oſtendebat,
Horribili ſuper aſpectu mortalibus inſtans,
Primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra
Eſt oculos auſus.— LIB. I.

ly regular and methodical, appear Sublime. We see the limits on every side; we feel ourselves confined; there is no room for the mind's exerting any great effort. Exact proportion of parts, though it enters often into the beautiful, is much disregarded in the Sublime. A great mass of rocks, thrown together by the hand of nature with wildness and confusion, strike the mind with more Grandeur, than if they had been adjusted to each other with the most accurate symmetry.)

In the feeble attempts, which human art can make towards producing grand objects, (feeble, I mean, in comparison with the powers of nature) greatness of dimensions always constitutes a principal part. No pile of building can convey any idea of Sublimity, unless it be ample and lofty. There is, too, in architecture, what is called Greatness of manner; which seems chiefly to arise, from presenting the object to us in one full point of view; so that it shall make its impression whole, entire, and undivided, upon the mind. A Gothic cathedral raises ideas of Grandeur in our minds, by its size, its height, its awful obscurity, its strength, its antiquity, and its durability.

(There still remains to be mentioned one class of Sublime objects, which may be called the moral, or sentimental Sublime; arising from certain exertions of the human mind; from certain affections, and actions, of our fellow-creatures. These will be found to be all, or chiefly, of that class, which comes under the name of Magnanimity or Heroism; and they produce an effect extremely similar to what is produced by the view of grand objects in nature; filling the mind with admiration, and elevating it above itself.) A noted instance of this, quoted by all the French Critics, is the celebrated *Qu'il Mourût* of Corneille, in the Tragedy of Horace. In the famous combat betwixt the Horatii and the Curiatii, the old Horatius being informed, that two of his sons are slain, and that the third had betaken himself to flight, at first will not believe the report; but being thoroughly assured of the fact, is fired with all the sentiments of high honour and indignation at this supposed unworthy behaviour of his surviving son. He is reminded, that his son stood alone against three, and asked what he would have had him to have done? "To have died," he answers. In the same manner Porus, taken prisoner by Alexander, after a gallant defence, and asked in what manner he would be treated?

ed? anſwering, "Like a king;" and Cæſar chiding the pilot who was afraid to ſet out with him in the ſtorm, "Quid times? "Cæſarem vehis;" are good inſtances of this ſentimental Sublime. (Wherever, in ſome critical and high ſituation, we behold a man uncommonly intrepid, and reſting upon himſelf; ſuperior to paſſion and to fear; animated by ſome great principle to the contempt of popular opinion, of ſelfiſh intereſt, of dangers, or of death; there we are ſtruck with a ſenſe of the Sublime.*)

High virtue is the moſt natural and fertile ſource of this moral Sublimity. However, on ſome occaſions, where virtue either has no place, or is but imperfectly diſplayed, yet if extraordinary vigour and force of mind be diſcovered, we are not inſenſible to a degree of Grandeur in the character; and from the ſplendid conqueror, or the daring conſpirator, whom we are far from approving, we cannot withhold our admiration.†

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* The Sublime, in natural and in moral objects, is brought before us in one view, and compared together, in the following beautiful paſſage of Akenſide's Pleaſures of the Imagination:

Look then abroad through nature, to the range
Of planets, ſuns, and adamantine ſpheres,
Wheeling, unſhaken, thro' the void immenſe;
And ſpeak, O man! does this capacious ſcene,
With half that kindling majeſty, dilate
Thy ſtrong conception, as when Brutus roſe,
Refulgent, from the ſtroke of Cæſar's fate,
Amid the crowd of patriots; and his arm
Aloft extending, like eternal Jove,
When guilt brings down the thunder, call'd aloud
On Tully's name, and ſhook his crimſon ſteel,
And bade the father of his country hail!
For lo! the tyrant proſtrate on the duſt;
And Rome again is free. BOOK I.

† Silius Italicus has ſtudied to give an auguſt idea of Hannibal, by repreſenting him as ſurrounded with all his victories, in the place of guards. One who had formed a deſign of aſſaſſinating him in the midſt of a feaſt, is thus addreſſed:

Fallit te, menſas inter quod credis inermem;
Tot bellis quæſita viro, tot cœdibus, armat
Majeſtas æterna ducem. Si admoveris ora
Cannas & Trebiam ante oculos, Traſymenaque buſta
Et Pauli ſtare ingentem miraberis umbram.

A thought ſomewhat of the ſame nature occurs in a French author, "Il ſe "cache; mais ſa reputation le decouvre: Il marche ſans ſuite & ſans equipage; "mais chacun, dans ſon eſprit, le met ſur un char de triomphe. On compte, "en le voiant, les ennemis qu'il a vaincus, non pas les ſerviteurs qui le ſuivent. "Tout ſeul qu'il eſt, on ſe figure, autour de lui, ſes vertus, & ſes victoires "qui l'accompagnent. Moins il eſt ſuperbe, plus il devient venerable."—Oraiſon funebre de M. de Turenne, par M. Flechier.—Both theſe paſſages are ſplendid, rather than ſublime. In the firſt, there is a want of juſtneſs in the thought; in the ſecond, of ſimplicity in the expreſſion.

I have now enumerated a variety of inſtances, both in inanimate objects and in human life, wherein the Sublime appears. In all theſe inſtances, the emotion raiſed in us is of the ſame kind, although the objects that produce the emotion be of widely different kinds. A queſtion next ariſes, whether we are able to diſcover ſome one fundamental quality in which all theſe different objects agree, and which is the cauſe of their producing an emotion of the ſame nature in our minds? Various hypotheſes have been formed concerning this; but, as far as appears to me, hitherto unſatisfactory. Some have imagined that amplitude, or great extent, joined with ſimplicity, is either immediately, or remotely, the fundamental quality of whatever is ſublime; but we have ſeen that amplitude is confined to one ſpecies of Sublime objects, and cannot, without violent ſtraining, be applied to them all. The Author of "A Philoſophical "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and "Beautiful." to whom we are indebted for ſeveral ingenious and original thoughts upon this ſubject, propoſes a formal theory upon this foundation, That terror is the ſource of the Sublime, and that no objects have this character, but ſuch as produce impreſſions of pain and danger. It is indeed true, that many terrible objects are highly Sublime; and that Grandeur does not refuſe an alliance with the idea of danger. But though this is very properly illuſtrated by the Author, (many of whoſe ſentiments on that head I have adopted) yet he ſeems to ſtretch his theory too far, when he repreſents the Sublime as conſiſting wholly in modes of danger, or of pain. For the proper ſenſation of Sublimity appears to be very diſtinguiſhable from the ſenſation of either of theſe; and, on ſeveral occaſions, to be entirely ſeparated from them. In many grand objects, there is no coincidence with terror at all; as in the magnificent proſpect of wide extended plains, and of the ſtarry firmament; or in the moral diſpoſitions and ſentiments, which we view with high admiration; and in many painful and terrible objects alſo, it is clear, there is no ſort of Grandeur. The amputation of a limb, or the bite of a ſnake, are exceedingly terrible; but are deſtitute of all claim whatever to Sublimity. I am inclined to think, that mighty force or power, whether accompanied with terror or not, whether employed

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in protecting, or in alarming us, has a better title, than any thing that has yet been mentioned, to be the fundamental quality of the Sublime; as, after the review which we have taken, there does not occur to me any Sublime Object, into the idea of which, power, ſtrength, and force, either enter not directly, or are not, at leaſt, intimately aſſociated with the idea by leading our thoughts to ſome aſtoniſhing power, as concerned in the production of the object. However, I do not inſiſt upon this as ſufficient to found a general theory: It is enough, now, to have given this view of the nature and different kinds of Sublime Objects; by which I hope to have laid a proper foundation for diſcuſſing, with greater accuracy, the Sublime in Writing and Compoſition.

LECTURE

LECTURE IV.

THE SUBLIME IN WRITING.

HAVING treated of Grandeur or Sublimity in external objects, the way ſeems now to be cleared, for treating, with more advantage, of the deſcriptions of ſuch objects; or, of what is called the Sublime in Writing. Though it may appear early to enter on the conſideration of this ſubject; yet, as the Sublime is a ſpecies of Writing which depends leſs than any other on the artificial embelliſhments of rhetoric, it may be examined with as much propriety here, as in any ſubſequent part of the Lectures.

Many critical terms have unfortunately been employed, in a ſenſe too looſe and vague; none more ſo, than that of the Sublime. Every one is acquainted with the character of Cæſar's Commentaries, and of the ſtyle in which they are written; a ſtyle remarkably pure, ſimple, and elegant; but the moſt remote from the Sublime, of any of the claſſical authors. Yet this author has a German critic, Johannes Gulielmus Bergerus, who wrote no longer ago than the year 1720, pitched upon as the perfect model of the Sublime, and has compoſed a quarto volume, entitled, *De naturali pulchritudine Orationis*; the expreſs intention of which, is to ſhew, that Cæſar's Commentaries contain the moſt complete exemplification of all Longinus's rules relating to Sublime Writing. This I mention as a ſtrong proof of the confuſed ideas which have prevailed, concerning this ſubject. The true ſenſe of Sublime Writing, undoubtedly, is ſuch a deſcription of objects, or exhibition of ſentiments, which are in themſelves of a Sublime nature, as ſhall give us ſtrong impreſſions of them. But there is another very indefinite, and therefore very improper, ſenſe, which has been too often put upon it; when it is applied to ſignify any remarkable and diſ-

tinguiſhing excellency of compoſition; whether it raiſe in us the ideas of grandeur, or thoſe of gentleneſs, elegance, or any other ſort of beauty. In this ſenſe, Cæſar's Commentaries may, indeed, be termed Sublime, and ſo may many Sonnets, Paſtorals, and Love Elegies, as well as Homer's Iliad. But this evidently confounds the uſe of words, and marks no one ſpecies, or character, of compoſition whatever.

I am ſorry to be obliged to obſerve, that the Sublime is too often uſed in this laſt and improper ſenſe, by the celebrated critic Longinus, in his treatiſe on this ſubject. He ſets out, indeed, with deſcribing it in its juſt and proper meaning; as ſomething that elevates the mind above itſelf, and fills it with high conceptions, and a noble pride. But from this view of it he frequently departs; and ſubſtitutes in the place of it, whatever, in any ſtrain of compoſition, pleaſes highly. Thus, many of the paſſages which he produces as inſtances of the Sublime, are merely elegant, without having the moſt diſtant relation to proper Sublimity; witneſs Sappho's famous Ode, on which he deſcants at conſiderable length. He points out five ſources of the Sublime. The firſt is, Boldneſs or Grandeur of the Thoughts; the ſecond is, the Pathetic; the third, the proper application of Figures; the fourth, the uſe of Tropes and beautiful expreſſions; the fifth, Muſical Structure and Arrangement of Words. This is the plan of one who was writing a treatiſe of rhetoric, or of the beauties of Writing in general; not of the Sublime in particular. For of theſe five heads, only the two firſt have any peculiar relation to the Sublime; Boldneſs and Grandeur in the Thoughts, and, in ſome inſtances, the Pathetic, or ſtrong exertions of Paſſion: The other three, Tropes, Figures, and Muſical Arrangement, have no more relation to the Sublime, than to other kinds of good Writing; perhaps leſs to the Sublime than to any other ſpecies whatever; becauſe it requires leſs the aſſiſtance of ornament. From this it appears, that clear and preciſe ideas on this head are not to be expected from that writer. I would not, however, be underſtood, as if I meant, by this cenſure, to repreſent his treatiſe as of ſmall value. I know no critic, ancient or modern, that diſcovers a more lively reliſh of the beauties of fine Writing, than Longinus; and he has alſo the merit of being himſelf an excellent,

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and, in ſeveral paſſages, a truly Sublime writer. But, as his work has been generally conſidered as a ſtandard on this ſubject, it was incumbent on me to give my opinion concerning the benefit to be derived from it. It deſerves to be conſulted, not ſo much for diſtinct inſtruction concerning the Sublime, as for excellent general ideas concerning beauty in Writing.

I return now to the proper and natural idea of the Sublime in compoſition. (The foundation of it muſt always be laid in the nature of the object deſcribed. Unleſs it be ſuch an object as, if preſented to our eyes, if exhibited to us in reality, would raiſe ideas of that elevating, that awful, and magnificent kind, which we call Sublime; the deſcription, however finely drawn, is not entitled to come under this claſs. This excludes all objects that are merely beautiful, gay, or elegant. In the next place, the object muſt not only, in itſelf, be Sublime, but it muſt be ſet before us in ſuch a light as is moſt proper to give us a clear and full impreſſion of it; it muſt be deſcribed with ſtrength, with conciſeneſs, and ſimplicity. This depends, principally, upon the lively impreſſion which the poet, or orator has of the object which he exhibits; and upon his being deeply affected, and warmed, by the Sublime idea which he would convey. If his own feeling be languid, he can never inſpire us with any ſtrong emotion. Inſtances, which are extremely neceſſary on this ſubject, will clearly ſhow the importance of all thoſe requiſites which I have juſt now mentioned.)

(It is, generally ſpeaking, among the moſt ancient authors, that we are to look for the moſt ſtriking inſtances of the Sublime. I am inclined to think, that the early ages of the world, and the rude unimproved ſtate of ſociety, are peculiarly favourable to the ſtrong emotions of Sublimity. The genius of men is then much turned to admiration and aſtoniſhment. Meeting with many objects, to them new and ſtrange, their imagination is kept glowing, and their paſſions are often raiſed to the utmoſt. They think, and expreſs themſelves boldly, and without reſtraint. In the progreſs of ſociety, the genius and manners of men undergo a change more favourable to accuracy, than to ſtrength or Sublimity.

Of

Of all writings, ancient or modern, the Sacred Scriptures afford us the higheſt inſtances of the Sublime. The deſcriptions of the Deity, in them, are wonderfully noble; both from the grandeur of the object, and the manner of repreſenting it. What an aſſemblage, for inſtance, of awful and ſublime ideas is preſented to us, in that paſſage of the XVIIIth Pſalm, where an appearance of the Almighty is deſcribed? "In my diſtreſs "I called upon the Lord; he heard my voice out of his tem- "ple, and my cry came before him. Then, the earth ſhook "and trembled; the foundations alſo of the hills were moved; "becauſe he was wroth. He bowed the heavens, and came "down, and darkneſs was under his feet; and he did ride "upon a Cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings "of the wind. He made darkneſs his ſecret place; his pavilion "round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the "ſky." Here, agreeably to the principles eſtabliſhed in the laſt Lecture, we ſee with what propriety and ſucceſs the circumſtances of darkneſs and terror are applied for heightening the Sublime. So, alſo, the prophet Habakkuk, in a ſimilar paſſage: "He ſtood, and meaſured the earth: he beheld, and "drove aſunder the nations. The everlaſting mountains were "ſcattered; the perpetual hills did bow; his ways are everlaſt- "ing. The mountains ſaw thee; and they trembled. The "overflowing of the water paſſed by. The deep uttered his "voice, and lifted up his hands on high."

The noted inſtance, given by Longinus, from Moſes, "God "ſaid, Let there be light; and there was light," is not liable to the cenſure which I paſſed on ſome of his inſtances, of being foreign to the ſubject. It belongs to the true Sublime; and the Sublimity of it ariſes from the ſtrong conception it gives, of an exertion of power, producing its effect with the utmoſt ſpeed and facility. A thought of the ſame kind is magnificently amplified in the following paſſage of Naiah; (chap. xxiv. 24. 27, 28.) "Thus ſaith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that "formed thee from the womb: I am the Lord that maketh all "things, that ſtretcheth forth the heavens alone, that ſpreadeth "abroad the earth by myſelf—that ſaith to the deep, Be dry, and "I will dry up thy rivers; that ſaith of Cyrus, He is my ſhep- "herd, and ſhall perform all my pleaſure; even, ſaying to "Jeruſalem, Thou ſhalt be built; and to the Temple, Thy

"foundation

"foundation ſhall be laid.") There is a paſſage in the Pſalms, which deſerves to be mentioned under this head: "God," ſays the Pſalmiſt, "ſtilleth the noiſe of the ſeas, the noiſe of "their waves, and the tumults of the people." The joining together two ſuch grand objects, as the ragings of the waters, and the tumults of the people, between which there is ſo much reſemblance as to form a very natural aſſociation in the fancy, and the repreſenting them both as ſubject, at one moment, to the command of God, produces a noble effect.

(Homer is a poet, who, in all ages, and by all critics, has been greatly admired for Sublimity; and he owes much of his grandeur to that native and unaffected ſimplicity which characteriſes his manner. His deſcriptions of hoſts engaging; the animation, the fire, and rapidity, which he throws into his battles, preſent to every reader of the Iliad, frequent inſtances of Sublime Writing. His introduction of the gods, tends often to heighten, in a high degree, the majeſty of his warlike ſcenes.) Hence Longinus beſtows ſuch high and juſt commendations on that paſſage, in the 15th book of the Iliad, where Neptune, when preparing to iſſue forth into the engagement, is deſcribed as ſhaking the mountains with his ſteps, and driving his chariot along the ocean. Minerva, arming herſelf for fight in the Vth book; and Apollo, in the XVth, leading on the Trojans, and flaſhing terror with his Ægis on the face of the Greeks, are ſimilar inſtances of great Sublimity added to the deſcription of battles, by the appearances of thoſe celeſtial beings. (In the XXth book, where all the gods take part in the engagement, according as they ſeverally favour either the Grecians, or the Trojans, the poet ſeems to put forth one of the higheſt efforts, and the deſcription riſes into the moſt awful magnificence. All nature is repreſented as in commotion. Jupiter thunders in the heavens; Neptune ſtrikes the earth with his Trident; the ſhips, the city, and the mountains ſhake; the earth trembles to its centre; Pluto ſtarts from his throne, in dread leſt the ſecrets of the infernal region ſhould be laid open to the view of mortals. The paſſage is worthy of being inſerted.

Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ μεθ' ὅμιλον Ὀλύμπιοι ὦλυσεν ἀνδρῶν,
Ὦρτο δ' Ἔρις κρατερὴ, λαοσσόος αὖε δ' Ἀθήνη,——
Αὖε δ' Ἄρης ἐτίρωθεν, ἐρεμνῇ λαίλαπι ἶσος,——
Ὡς τὺς ἀμφοτέρους μάκαρες θεοὶ ὀτρύνοντες,

Σύμβαλον,

Σύμβαλον, ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς ἔριδα ῥήλνυντο βαρεῖαν·
Δεινὸν, δ' ἐβρόντησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε
Ὑψόθεν· αὐτὰρ ἔνερθε Ποσειδάων ἐτίναξε
Γαῖαν ἀπειρεσίην, ὀρέων τ' αἰπεινὰ κάρηνα.
Πάντες δ' ἐσσείοντο πόδες πολυπιδάκου Ἴδης,
Καὶ κορυφαὶ, Τρώων τε πόλις, καὶ νῆες Ἀχαιῶν.
Ἔδδεισεν δ' ὑπένερθεν ἄναξ ἐνέρων, Ἀϊδωνεὺς,
Δείσας δ' ἐκ θρόνου ἆλτο, καὶ ἴαχε· μὴ οἱ ὕπερθε
Γαῖαν ἀναῤῥήξειε Ποσειδάων ἐνοσίχθων,
Οἰκία δε θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισι φανείη
Σμερδαλέ', ἐνρώεντα, τά τε στυγέουσι θεοί περ'
Τόσσος ἄρα κτύπος ὦρτο θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνιόντων.*) Iliad, 20. 47, &c.

The works of Ossian (as I have elsewhere shewn) abound with examples of the Sublime. The subjects of that Author, and the manner in which he writes, are particularly favourable to it. He possesses all the plain and venerable manner of the ancient times. He deals in no superfluous or gaudy ornaments; but throws forth his images with a rapid conciseness, which enables them to strike the mind with the greatest force. Among poets of more polished times, we are to look for the graces of correct writing, for just proportion of parts, and skilfully conducted narration. In the midst of smiling scenery and pleasurable themes, the gay and the beautiful will appear, undoubtedly, to more

* But when the powers descending swell'd the fight,
Then tumult rose, fierce rage, and pale affright:
Now through the trembling shores Minerva calls,
And now she thunders from the Grecian walls.
Mars, hov'ring o'er his Troy, his terror shrouds
In gloomy tempests, and a night of clouds;
Now through each Trojan heart he fury pours,
With voice divine, from Ilion's topmost towers——
Above, the Sire of gods his thunder rolls,
And peals on peals redoubled rend the poles;
Beneath, stern Neptune shakes the solid ground,
The forests wave, the mountains nod around;
Through all her summits tremble Ida's woods,
And from their sources boil her hundred floods:
Troy's turrets totter on the rocking plain,
And the toss'd navies beat the heaving main.
Deep in the dismal region of the dead,
Th' infernal monarch rear'd his horrid head,
Leapt from his throne, lest Neptune's arm should lay
His dark dominions open to the day;
And pour in light on Pluto's drear abodes,
Abhorr'd by men, and dreadful ev'n to gods.
Such wars th' immortals wage; such horrors rend
The world's vast concave, when the gods contend.

POPE.

more advantage. But amidſt the rude ſcenes of nature and of ſociety, ſuch as Oſſian deſcribes; amidſt rocks and torrents, and whirlwinds, and battles, dwells the Sublime; and naturally aſſociates itſelf with that grave and ſolemn ſpirit which diſtinguiſhes the Author of Fingal. "As autumn's dark ſtorms "pour from two echoing hills, ſo toward each other approach-"ed the heroes. As two dark ſtreams from high rocks meet "and mix, and roar on the plain; loud, rough, and dark, in "battle, met Lochlin and Inisfail: chief mixed his ſtrokes "with chief, and man with man. Steel clanging ſounded on "ſteel. Helmets are cleft on high: blood burſts, and ſmokes "around. As the troubled noiſe of the ocean when roll the "waves on high; as the laſt peal of the thunder of heaven; "ſuch is the noiſe of battle. The groan of the people ſpread "over the hills. It was like the thunder of night, when "the cloud burſts on Cona, and a thouſand ghoſts ſhriek "at once on the hollow wind." Never were images of more awful Sublimity employed to heighten the terror of battle.

I have produced theſe inſtances, in order to demonſtrate how eſſential conciſeneſs and ſimplicity are to Sublime Writing. Simplicity, I place in oppoſition to ſtudied and profuſe ornament; and conciſeneſs, to ſuperfluous expreſſion. The reaſon why a defect, either in conciſeneſs or ſimplicity, is hurtful in a peculiar manner to the Sublime, I ſhall endeavour to explain. The emotion occaſioned in the mind by ſome great or noble object, raiſes it conſiderably above its ordinary pitch. A ſort of enthuſiaſm is produced, extremely agreeable while it laſts; but from which the mind is tending every moment to fall down into its ordinary ſituation. Now, when an author has brought us, or is attempting to bring us, into this ſtate; if he multiplies words unneceſſarily; if he decks the Sublime object which he preſents to us, round and round, with glittering ornaments; nay, if he throws in any one decoration that ſinks in the leaſt below the capital image, that moment he alters the key; he relaxes the tenſion of the mind; the ſtrength of the feeling is emaſculated; the Beautiful may remain, but the Sublime is gone. When Julius Cæſar ſaid to the pilot who was afraid to put to ſea with him in a ſtorm, "Quid

"times?

"times? Cæsarem vehis;" we are struck with the daring magnanimity of one relying with such confidence on his cause and his fortune. These few words convey every thing necessary to give us the impression full. Lucan resolved to amplify and adorn the thought. Observe how every time he twists it round, it departs farther from the Sublime, till it end at last in tumid declamation.

Sperne minas, inquit, pelagi, ventoque furenti
Trade sinum: Italiam, si, cœlo auctore, recusas,
Me, pete. Sola tibi causa hæc est justa timoris
Victorem non nosse tuum; quem numina nunquam
Destituunt; de quo male tunc Fortuna meretur
Cum post vota venit. Medias perrumpe procellas
Tutelâ secure meâ. Cœli isti fretique
Non puppis nostræ labor est. Hanc Cæsare pressam
A fluctu defendet onus; nam proderit undis
Ista ratis.——Quid tanta strage paratur
Ignoras? quærit pelagi cœlique tumultu
Quid præstet fortuna mihi.*—— PHARS. V. 578.

On account of the great importance of simplicity and conciseness, I conceive rhyme, in English verse, to be, if not inconsistent with the Sublime, at least very unfavourable to it. The constrained elegance of this kind of verse, and studied smoothness of the sounds, answering regularly to each other at the end of the line, though they be quite consistent with gentle emotions,

* But Cæsar still superior to distress,
Fearless and confident of sure success,
Thus to the pilot loud:——The seas despise,
And the vain threat'ning of the noisy skies;
Though gods deny thee yon Ausonian strand,
Yet go, I charge you, go, at my command,
Thy ignorance alone can cause thy fears,
Thou know'st not what a freight thy vessel bears;
Thou know'st not I am he to whom 'tis given,
Never to want the care of watchful Heaven.
Obedient fortune waits my humble thrall,
And always ready, comes before I call.
Let winds, and seas, loud wars at freedom wage,
And waste upon themselves their empty rage,
A stronger, mightier Dæmon is thy friend,
Thou, and thy bark, on Cæsar's fate depend.
Thou stand'st amaz'd to view this dreadful scene,
And wonder'st what the gods and fortune mean;
But artfully their bounties thus they raise,
And from my danger arrogate new praise;
Amidst the fears of death they bid me live,
And still enhance what they are sure to give. ROWE.

tions, yet weaken the native force of Sublimity; beſides, that the ſuperfluous words which the poet is often obliged to introduce, in order to fill up the rhyme, tend farther to enfeeble it. Homer's deſcription of the nod of Jupiter, as ſhaking the heavens, has been admired, in all ages, as highly Sublime. Literally tranſlated, it runs thus: "He ſpoke, and bending his "ſable brows, gave the awful nod; while he ſhook the celeſtial "locks of his immortal head, all Olympus was ſhaken." Mr. Pope tranſlates it thus:

He ſpoke; and awful bends his ſable brows,
Shakes his ambroſial curls, and gives the nod,
The ſtamp of fate, and ſanction of a God.
High heaven with trembling the dread ſignal took,
And all Olympus to its centre ſhook.

The image is ſpread out, and attempted to be beautiful; but it is, in truth, weakened. The third line—"The ſtamp "of fate, and ſanction of a God," is merely expletive; and introduced for no other reaſon but to fill up the rhyme; for it interrupts the deſcription, and clogs the image. For the ſame reaſon, out of mere compliance with the rhyme, Jupiter is repreſented as ſhaking his locks before he gives the nod,—"Shakes his ambroſial curls, and gives the nod," which is trifling, and without meaning. Whereas, in the original, the hair of his head ſhaken, is the effect of his nod, and makes a happy picturesque circumſtance in the deſcription.*

The boldneſs, freedom, and variety of our blank verſe, is infinitely more favourable than rhyme, to all kinds of Sublime poetry. The fulleſt proof of this is afforded by Milton; an author, whoſe genius led him eminently to the Sublime. The whole firſt and ſecond books of Paradiſe Loſt, are continued inſtances of it. Take only, for an example, the following noted deſcription of Satan, after his fall, appearing at the head of the infernal hoſts:

——————— He, above the reſt,
In ſhape and geſture proudly eminent,
Stood like a tower: his form had not yet loſt
All her original brightneſs, nor appear'd
Leſs than archangel ruin'd; and the exceſs
Of glory obſcur'd: As when the ſun, new riſen,

* See Webb on the Beauties of Poetry.

Looks through the horizontal misty air,
Shorn of his beams; or, from behind the moon,
In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
On half the nations, and with fear of change
Perplexes monarchs. Darken'd so, yet shone
Above them all th' archangel.———

Here concur a variety of sources of the Sublime: The principal object eminently great; a high superior nature, fallen indeed, but erecting itself against distress; the grandeur of the principal object heightened, by associating it with so noble an idea as that of the sun suffering an eclipse; this picture shaded with all those images of change and trouble, of darkness and terror, which coincide so finely with the Sublime emotion; and the whole expressed in a style and versification, easy, natural, and simple, but magnificent.

I have spoken of simplicity and conciseness, as essential to Sublime Writing. In my general description of it, I mentioned Strength, as another necessary requisite. The Strength of description arises, in a great measure, from a simple conciseness; but, it supposes also something more; namely, a proper choice of circumstances in the description, so as to exhibit the object in its full and most striking point of view. For every object has several faces, so to speak, by which it may be presented to us, according to the circumstances with which we surround it; and it will appear eminently Sublime, or not, in proportion as all these circumstances are happily chosen, and of a Sublime kind. Here lies the great art of the writer; and, indeed, the great difficulty of Sublime description. If the description be too general, and divested of circumstances, the object appears in a faint light; it makes a feeble impression, or no impression at all, on the reader. At the same time, if any trivial or improper circumstances are mingled, the whole is degraded.

A storm or tempest, for instance, is a Sublime object in nature. But, to render it Sublime in description, it is not enough, either to give us mere general expressions concerning the violence of the tempest, or to describe its common, vulgar effects, in overthrowing trees and houses. It must be painted with such circumstances as fill the mind with great and awful ideas. This is very happily done by Virgil, in the following passage:

Ipse

Ipſe Pater, media nimborum in nocte, coruſcâ
Fulmina molitur dextra; quo maxima motu
Terra tremit; fugere feræ; & mortalia corda
Per gentes humilis ſtravit pavor: Ille, flagranti
Aut Atho, aut Rhodopen, aut alta Ceraunia telo
Dejicit.*——————— GEOR. I.

Every circumſtance in this noble deſcription is the production of an imagination heated and aſtoniſhed with the grandeur of the object. If there be any defect, it is in the words immediately following thoſe I have quoted: "Ingeminant Auſtri, "et denſiſſimus imber;" where the tranſition is made too haſtily, I am afraid, from the preceding Sublime images, to a thick ſhower, and the blowing of the ſouth wind; and ſhews how difficult it frequently is, to deſcend with grace, without ſeeming to fall.

The high importance of the rule which I have been now giving, concerning the proper choice of circumſtances, when deſcription is meant to be Sublime, ſeems to me not to have been ſufficiently attended to. It has, however, ſuch a foundation in nature, as renders the leaſt deflexion from it fatal. When a writer is aiming at the beautiful only, his deſcriptions may have improprieties in them, and yet be beautiful ſtill. Some trivial, or misjudged circumſtances, can be overlooked by the reader; they make only the difference of more or leſs; the gay, or pleaſing emotion, which he has raiſed, ſubſiſts ſtill. But the caſe is quite different with the Sublime. There, one trifling circumſtance, one mean idea, is ſufficient to deſtroy the whole charm. This is owing to the nature of the emotion aimed at by Sublime deſcription, which admits of no mediocrity, and cannot ſubſiſt in a middle ſtate; but muſt either highly tranſport us, or, if unſucceſsful in the execution, leave us greatly

* The Father of the gods his glory ſhrouds,
Involv'd in tempeſts, and a night of clouds;
And from the middle darkneſs flaſhing out,
By fits he deals his fiery bolts about.
Earth feels the motions of her angry God,
Her entrails tremble, and her mountains nod,
And flying beaſts in foreſts ſeek abode.
Deep horror ſeizes every human breaſt;
Their pride is humbled, and their fears confeſt;
While he, from high his rolling thunders throws,
And fires the mountains with repeated blows;
The rocks are from their old foundations rent,
The winds redouble, and the rains augment. DRYDEN.

greatly diſguſted and diſpleaſed. We attempt to riſe along with the writer; the imagination is awakened, and put upon the ſtretch; but it requires to be ſupported; and if, in the midſt of its efforts, you deſert it unexpectedly, down it comes with a painful ſhock. When Milton, in his battle of the angels, deſcribes them as tearing up the mountains, and throwing them at one another; there are, in his deſcription, as Mr. Addiſon has obſerved, no circumſtances but what are properly Sublime:

> From their foundations loos'ning to and fro,
> They pluck'd the ſeated hills, with all their load,
> Rocks, waters, woods; and by the ſhaggy tops
> Uplifting, bore them in their hands.———

Whereas Claudian, in a fragment upon the wars of the giants, has contrived to render this idea of their throwing the mountains, which is in itſelf ſo grand, burleſque and ridiculous; by this ſingle circumſtance, of one of his giants with the mountain Ida upon his ſhoulders, and a river, which flowed from the mountain, running down along the giant's back, as he held it up in that poſture. There is a deſcription too in Virgil, which, I think, is cenſurable, though more ſlightly in this reſpect. It is that of the burning mountain Ætna; a ſubject certainly very proper to be worked up by a poet into a Sublime deſcription:

> ———Horrificis juxta tonat Ætna ruinis.
> Interdumque atram prorumpit ad æthera nubem,
> Turbine fumantem piceo, & candente favilla;
> Attollitque globos flammarum, & ſidera lambit.
> Interdum ſcopulos, avulſaque viſcera montis
> Erigit eructans, liquefactaque ſaxa ſub auras
> Cum gemitu glomerat, fundoque exæſtuat imo.* ÆN. III. 571.

Here, after ſeveral magnificent images, the poet concludes with perſonifying the mountain under this figure, "eructans "viſcera

> * The port capacious, and ſecure from wind,
> Is to the foot of thundering Ætna join'd:
> By turns a pitchy cloud ſhe rolls on high,
> By turns hot embers from her entrails fly,
> And flakes of mounting flames that lick the ſky.
> Oft from her bowels maſſy rocks are thrown,
> And ſhiver'd by the force, come piece-meal down.
> Oft liquid lakes of burning ſulphur flow,
> Fed from the fiery ſprings that boil below. DRYDEN.

In this tranſlation of Dryden's, the debaſing circumſtance to which I object in the original, is, with propriety, omitted.

"viſcera cum gemitu," belching up its bowels with a groan; which, by likening the mountain to a ſick or drunk perſon, degrades the majeſty of the deſcription. It is to no purpoſe to tell us, that the poet here alludes to the fable of the giant Enceladus lying under Mount Ætna; and that he ſuppoſes his motions and toſſings to have occaſioned the fiery eruptions. He intended the deſcription of a Sublime object; and the natural ideas, raiſed by a burning mountain, are infinitely more lofty, than the belchings of any giant, how huge ſoever. The debaſing effect of the idea which is here preſented, will appear in a ſtronger light, by ſeeing what figure it makes in a poem of Sir Richard Blackmore's, who, through a monſtrous perverſity of taſte, had choſen this for the capital circumſtance in his deſcription, and thereby (as Dr. Arbuthnot humorouſly obſerves, in his Treatiſe on the Art of Sinking) had repreſented the mountain as in a fit of the colic.

> Ætna, and all the burning mountains find
> Their kindled ſtores with inbred ſtorms of wind
> Blown up to rage, and roaring out complain,
> As torn with inward gripes, and torturing pain;
> Labouring, they caſt their dreadful vomit round,
> And with their melted bowels ſpread the ground.

Such inſtances ſhew how much the Sublime depends upon a juſt ſelection of circumſtances; and with how great care every circumſtance muſt be avoided, which, by bordering in the leaſt upon the mean, or even upon the gay or the trifling, alters the tone of the emotion.

If it ſhall be now inquired, What are the proper ſources of the Sublime? My anſwer is, That they are to be looked for every where in nature. It is not by hunting after tropes, and figures, and rhetorical aſſiſtances, that we can expect to produce it. No: it ſtands clear, for the moſt part, of theſe laboured refinements of art. It muſt come unſought, if it come at all; and be the natural offspring of a ſtrong imagination.

> Eſt Deus in nobis; agitante caleſcimus illo.

Wherever a great and awful object is preſented in nature, or a very magnanimous and exalted affection of the human mind is diſplayed; thence, if you can catch the impreſſion ſtrongly,

ſtrongly, and exhibit it warm and glowing, you may draw the Sublime. Theſe are its only proper ſources. In judging of any ſtriking beauty in compoſition, whether it is, or is not, to be referred to this claſs, we muſt attend to the nature of the emotion which it raiſes; and only, if it be of that elevating, ſolemn, and awful kind, which diſtinguiſhes this feeling, we can pronounce it Sublime.

From the account which I have given of the nature of the Sublime, it clearly follows, that it is an emotion which can never be long protracted. The mind, by no force of genius, can be kept, for any conſiderable time, ſo far raiſed above its common tone; but will, of courſe, relax into its ordinary ſituation. Neither are the abilities of any human writer ſufficient to ſupply a continued run of unmixed Sublime conceptions. The utmoſt we can expect is, that this fire of imagination ſhould ſometimes flaſh upon us like lightning from heaven, and then diſappear. In Homer and Milton, this effulgence of genius breaks forth more frequently, and with greater luſtre, than in moſt authors. Shakeſpeare alſo riſes often into the true Sublime. But no author whatever is Sublime throughout. Some, indeed, there are, who, by a ſtrength and dignity in their conceptions, and a current of high ideas that runs through the whole compoſition, preſerve the reader's mind always in a tone nearly allied to the Sublime; for which reaſon they may, in a limited ſenſe, merit the name of continued Sublime writers; and, in this claſs, we may juſtly place Demoſthenes and Plato.

As for what is called the Sublime ſtyle, it is, for the moſt part, a very bad one; and has no relation, whatever, to the real Sublime. Perſons are apt to imagine, that magnificent words, accumulated epithets, and a certain ſwelling kind of expreſſion, by riſing above what is uſual or vulgar, contributes to, or even forms, the Sublime. Nothing can be more falſe. In all the inſtances of Sublime Writing, which I have given, nothing of this kind appears. "God ſaid, Let there be light, "and there was light." This is ſtriking and Sublime. But put it into what is commonly called the Sublime ſtyle: "The "Sovereign Arbiter of nature, by the potent energy of a "ſingle word, commanded the light to exiſt;" and, as Boileau

leau has well obſerved, the ſtyle indeed is raiſed, but the thought is fallen. In general, in all good writing, the Sublime lies in the thought, not in the words; and when the thought is truly noble, it will, for the moſt part, clothe itſelf in a native dignity of language.) The Sublime, indeed, rejects mean, low, or trivial expreſſions; but it is equally an enemy to ſuch as are turgid. The main ſecret of being Sublime, is to ſay great things in few and plain words. It will be found to hold, without exception, that the moſt Sublime authors are the ſimpleſt in their ſtyle; and wherever you find a writer, who affects a more than ordinary pomp and parade of words, and is always endeavouring to magnify his ſubject by epithets, there you may immediately ſuſpect, that, feeble in ſentiment, he is ſtudying to ſupport himſelf by mere expreſſion.

The ſame unfavourable judgment we muſt paſs, on all that laboured apparatus with which ſome writers introduce a paſſage, or deſcription, which they intend ſhall be Sublime; calling on their readers to attend, invoking their muſe, or breaking forth into general, unmeaning exclamations, concerning the greatneſs, terribleneſs, or majeſty of the object, which they are to deſcribe. Mr. Addiſon, in his Campaign, has fallen into an error of this kind, when about to deſcribe the battle of Blenheim.

> But! O my Muſe! what numbers wilt thou find
> To ſing the furious troops in battle join'd?
> Methinks, I hear the drum's tumultuous ſound,
> The victor's ſhouts, and dying groans, confound; &c.

Introductions of this kind, are a forced attempt in a writer, to ſpur up himſelf, and his reader, when he finds his imagination flagging in vigour. It is like taking artificial ſpirits in order to ſupply the want of ſuch as are natural. By this obſervation, however, I do not mean to paſs a general cenſure on Mr. Addiſon's Campaign, which, in ſeveral places, is far from wanting merit; and in particular, the noted compariſon of his hero to the angel who rides in the whirlwind and directs the ſtorm, is a truly Sublime image.

The faults oppoſite to the Sublime are chiefly two: the Frigid, and the Bombaſt. The Frigid conſiſts, in degrading an object, or ſentiment, which is Sublime in itſelf, by our mean conception of it; or by our weak, low, and childiſh deſcription of it.

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This betrays entire abſence, or at leaſt great poverty of genius.) Of this, there are abundance of examples, and theſe commented upon with much humour, in the Treatiſe on the art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works; the inſtances taken chiefly from Sir Richard Blackmore. One of theſe, I had occaſion already to give, in relation to Mount Ætna, and it were needleſs to produce any more. (The Bombaſt lies, in forcing an ordinary or trivial object out of its rank, and endeavouring to raiſe it into the Sublime; or, in attempting to exalt a Sublime object beyond all natural and reaſonable bounds.) Into this error, which is but too common, writers of genius may ſometimes fall, by unluckily loſing ſight of the true point of the Sublime. This is alſo called fuſtian, or rant. Shakeſpeare, a great, but incorrect genius, is not unexceptionable here. Dryden and Lee, in their tragedies, abound with it.

Thus far of the Sublime; of which I have treated fully, becauſe it is ſo capital an excellency in fine writing, and becauſe clear and preciſe ideas on this head are, as far as I know, not to be met with in critical writers.

Before concluding this Lecture, there is one obſervation which I chooſe to make at this time; I ſhall make it once for all, and hope it will be afterwards remembered. It is with reſpect to the inſtances of faults, or rather blemiſhes and imperfections, which, as I have done in this Lecture, I ſhall hereafter continue to take, when I can, from writers of reputation. I have not the leaſt intention thereby to diſparage their character in the general. I ſhall have other occaſions of doing equal juſtice to their beauties. But it is no reflection on any human performance, that it is not abſolutely perfect. The taſk would be much eaſier for me, to collect inſtances of faults from bad writers. But they would draw no attention, when quoted from books which nobody reads. And I conceive, that the method which I follow, will contribute more to make the beſt authors be read with pleaſure, when one properly diſtinguiſhes their beauties from their faults; and is led to imitate and admire only what is worthy of imitation and admiration.

LECTURE

LECTURE V.

BEAUTY, AND OTHER PLEASURES OF TASTE.

AS Sublimity conſtitutes a particular character of compoſition, and forms one of the higheſt excellencies of eloquence and of poetry, it was proper to treat of it at ſome length. It will not be neceſſary to diſcuſs ſo particularly all the other pleaſures that ariſe from Taſte, as ſome of them have leſs relation to our main ſubject. On Beauty only I ſhall make ſeveral obſervations, both as the ſubject is curious, and as it tends to improve Taſte, and to diſcover the foundation of ſeveral of the graces of deſcription and of poetry.*

Beauty, next to Sublimity, affords, beyond doubt, the higheſt pleaſure to the imagination. The emotion which it raiſes, is very diſtinguiſhable from that of Sublimity. It is of a calmer kind; more gentle and ſoothing; does not elevate the mind ſo much, but produces an agreeable ſerenity. Sublimity raiſes a feeling, too violent, as I ſhowed, to be laſting; the pleaſure ariſing from Beauty admits of longer continuance. It extends alſo to a much greater variety of objects than Sublimity; to a variety indeed ſo great, that the feelings which Beautiful objects produce, differ conſiderably, not in degree only, but alſo in kind, from one another. Hence, no word in the language is uſed in a more vague ſignification than Beauty. It is applied to almoſt every external object that pleaſes the eye, or the ear; to a great number of the graces of writing; to many diſpoſitions of the mind; nay, to ſeveral objects of mere abſtract ſcience. We talk currently of a beautiful tree or flower; a beautiful poem; a beautiful character; and a beautiful theorem in mathematics.

* See Hutchinſon's Enquiry concerning Beauty and Virtue.—Gerard on Taſte, chap. iii.—Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful.—Elements of Criticiſm, chap. iii.—Spectator, vol. vi.—Eſſay on the Pleaſures of Taſte.

Hence we may eaſily perceive, that, among ſo great a variety of objects, to find out ſome one quality in which they all agree, and which is the foundation of that agreeable ſenſation they all raiſe, muſt be a very difficult, if not, more probably, a vain attempt. Objects, denominated Beautiful, are ſo different, as to pleaſe, not in virtue of any one quality common to them all, but by means of ſeveral different principles in human nature. The agreeable emotion which they all raiſe, is ſomewhat of the ſame nature; and therefore, has the common name of Beauty given to it; but it is raiſed by different cauſes.

Hypotheſes, however, have been framed by ingenious men, for aſſigning the fundamental quality of Beauty in all objects. In particular, Uniformity amidſt Variety, has been inſiſted on as this fundamental quality. For the Beauty of many figures, I admit that this accounts in a ſatisfactory manner. But when we endeavour to apply this principle to Beautiful objects of ſome other kind, as to Colour, for inſtance, or Motion, we ſhall ſoon find that it has no place. And even in external figured objects, it does not hold, that their Beauty is in proportion to their mixture of Variety with Uniformity; ſeeing many pleaſe us as highly Beautiful, which have almoſt no Variety at all; and others, which are various to a degree of intricacy. Laying ſyſtems of this kind, therefore, aſide, what I now propoſe is, to give an enumeration of ſeveral of thoſe claſſes of objects in which Beauty moſt remarkably appears; and to point out, as far as I can, the ſeparate principles of Beauty in each of them.

Colour affords, perhaps, the ſimpleſt inſtance of Beauty, and therefore the fitteſt to begin with. Here, neither Variety, nor Uniformity, nor any other principle that I know, can be aſſigned, as the foundation of Beauty. We can refer it to no other cauſe but the ſtructure of the eye, which determines us to receive certain modifications of the rays of light with more pleaſure than others. And we ſee accordingly, that, as the organ of ſenſation varies in different perſons, they have their different favourite colours. It is probable, that aſſociation of ideas has influence, in ſome caſes, on the pleaſure which we receive from colours. Green, for inſtance, may appear more beautiful, by being connected in our ideas with rural proſpects and ſcenes; white, with innocence; blue, with the ſerenity of the ſky. Independent of aſſo-

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ciations of this kind, all that we can farther obſerve concerning colours is, that thoſe choſen for Beauty are, generally, delicate, rather than glaring. Such are thoſe paintings with which nature hath ornamented ſome of her works, and which art ſtrives in vain to imitate; as the feathers of ſeveral kinds of birds, the leaves of flowers, and the fine variation of colours exhibited by the ſky at the riſing and ſetting of the ſun. Theſe preſent to us the higheſt inſtances of the Beauty of colouring; and have accordingly been the favourite ſubjects of poetical deſcription in all countries.

From Colour we proceed to Figure, which opens to us forms of Beauty more complex and diverſified. Regularity firſt occurs to be noticed as a ſource of Beauty. By a regular figure, is meant, one which we perceive to be formed according to ſome certain rule, and not left arbitrary, or looſe, in the conſtruction of its parts. Thus, a circle, a ſquare, a triangle, or a hexagon, pleaſe the eye, by their regularity, as beautiful figures. We muſt not, however, conclude, that all figures pleaſe in proportion to their regularity; or that regularity is the ſole, or the chief, foundation of Beauty in figure. On the contrary, a certain graceful variety is found to be a much more powerful principle of Beauty; and is therefore ſtudied a great deal more than regularity, in all works that are deſigned merely to pleaſe the eye. I am, indeed, inclined to think, that regularity appears beautiful to us, chiefly, if not only, on account of its ſuggeſting the ideas of fitneſs, propriety, and uſe, which have always a greater connexion with orderly and proportioned forms, than with thoſe which appear not conſtructed according to any certain rule. It is clear, that nature, who is undoubtedly the moſt graceful artiſt, hath, in all her ornamental works, purſued variety, with an apparent neglect of regularity. Cabinets, doors, and windows, are made after a regular form, in cubes and parallelograms, with exact proportion of parts; and by being ſo formed they pleaſe the eye; for this good reaſon, that, being works of uſe, they are by ſuch figures, the better ſuited to the ends for which they were deſigned. But plants, flowers, and leaves are full of variety and diverſity. A ſtraight canal is an inſipid figure, in compariſon of the meanders of rivers. Cones and pyramids are beautiful; but trees growing in their natural wildneſs,

wildneſs, are infinitely more beautiful than when trimmed into pyramids and cones. The apartments of a houſe muſt be regular in their diſpoſition, for the conveniency of its inhabitants; but a garden, which is deſigned merely for Beauty, would be exceedingly diſguſting, if it had as much uniformity and order in its parts as a dwelling-houſe.)

Mr. Hogarth, in his Analyſis of Beauty, has obſerved, that figures bounded by curve lines are, in general, more beautiful than thoſe bounded by ſtraight lines and angles. He pitches upon two lines, on which, according to him, the Beauty of figure principally depends; and he has illuſtrated and ſupported his doctrine, by a ſurpriſing number of inſtances. The one is the Waving Line, or a curve bending backwards and forwards, ſomewhat in the form of the letter S. This he calls the Line of Beauty; and ſhews how often it is found in ſhells, flowers, and ſuch other ornamental works of nature; as is common alſo in the figures deſigned by painters and ſculptors, for the purpoſe of decoration. The other Line, which he calls the Line of Grace, is the former waving curve, twiſted round ſome ſolid body. The curling worm of a common jack is one of the inſtances he gives of it. Twiſted pillars, and twiſted horns, alſo exhibit it. In all the inſtances which he mentions, Variety plainly appears to be ſo material a principle of Beauty, that he ſeems not to err much when he defines the art of drawing pleaſing forms, to be the art of varying well. For the curve line, ſo much the favourite of painters, derives, according to him, its chief advantage, from its perpetual bending and variation from the ſtiff regularity of the ſtraight line.

(Motion furniſhes another ſource of Beauty, diſtinct from Figure. Motion of itſelf is pleaſing; and bodies in motion are, "cæteris paribus," preferred to thoſe in reſt. It is, however, only gentle motion that belongs to the Beautiful; for when it is very ſwift, or very forcible, ſuch as that of a torrent, it partakes of the Sublime. The motion of a bird gliding through the air, is extremely Beautiful; the ſwiftneſs with which lightning darts through the heavens, is magnificent and aſtoniſhing. And here, it is proper to obſerve, that the ſenſations of Sublime and Beautiful are not always diſtinguiſhed by very diſtant boundaries; but are capable, in ſeveral inſtances,

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of approaching towards each other. Thus, a ſmooth running ſtream, is one of the moſt Beautiful objects in nature: as it ſwells gradually into a great river, the Beautiful, by degrees, is loſt in the Sublime. A young tree is a Beautiful object; a ſpreading ancient oak, is a venerable and a grand one. The calmneſs of a fine morning is Beautiful; the univerſal ſtillneſs of the evening is highly Sublime. But to return to the Beauty of motion, it will be found, I think, to hold very generally, that motion in a ſtraight line is not ſo Beautiful as in an undulating waving direction; and motion upwards is, commonly too, more agreeable than motion downwards. The eaſy curling motion of flame and ſmoke may be inſtanced, as an object ſingularly agreeable: and here Mr. Hogarth's waving line recurs upon us as a principle of Beauty. That artiſt obſerves very ingeniouſly, that all the common and neceſſary motions for the buſineſs of life, are performed by men in ſtraight or plain lines: but that all the graceful and ornamental movements are made in waving lines: an obſervation not unworthy of being attended to, by all who ſtudy the grace of geſture and action.

Though Colour, Figure, and Motion, be ſeparate principles of Beauty; yet in many beautiful objects they all meet, and thereby render the Beauty both greater, and more complex. Thus, in flowers, trees, animals, we are entertained at once with the delicacy of the colour, with the gracefulneſs of the figure, and ſometimes alſo with the motion of the object. Although each of theſe produce a ſeparate agreeable ſenſation, yet they are of ſuch a ſimilar nature, as readily to mix and blend in one general perception of Beauty, which we aſcribe to the whole object as its cauſe: For Beauty is always conceived by us, as ſomething reſiding in the object which raiſes the pleaſant ſenſation; a ſort of glory which dwells upon, and inveſts it. Perhaps the moſt complete aſſemblage of Beautiful objects that can any where be found, is preſented by a rich natural landſcape, where there is a ſufficient variety of objects: fields in verdure, ſcattered trees and flowers, running water, and animals grazing. If to theſe be joined, ſome of the productions of art, which ſuit ſuch a ſcene; as a bridge with arches over a river, ſmoke riſing from cottages in the midſt of trees, and the diſtant view of a fine building ſeen by the riſing ſun; we

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then enjoy, in the higheſt perfection, that gay, cheerful, and placid ſenſation which characteriſes Beauty. To have an eye and a taſte formed for catching the peculiar Beauties of ſuch ſcenes as theſe, is a neceſſary requiſite for all who attempt poetical deſcription.

The Beauty of the human countenance is more complex than any that we have yet conſidered. It includes the Beauty of colour, ariſing from the delicate ſhades of the complexion; and the Beauty of figure, ariſing from the lines which form the different features of the face. But the chief Beauty of the countenance depends upon a myſterious expreſſion, which it conveys of the qualities of the mind; of good ſenſe, or good humour; of ſprightlineſs, candour, benevolence, ſenſibility, or other amiable diſpoſitions. How it comes to paſs, that a certain conformation of features is connected in our idea with certain moral qualities; whether we are taught by inſtinct, or by experience, to form this connexion, and to read the mind in the countenance; belongs not to us now to inquire, nor is indeed eaſy to reſolve. The fact is certain, and acknowledged, that what gives the human countenance its moſt diſtinguiſhing Beauty, is what is called its expreſſion; or an image, which it is conceived to ſhew of internal moral diſpoſitions.

This leads us to obſerve, that there are certain qualities of the mind which, whether expreſſed in the countenance, or by words, or by actions, always raiſe in us a feeling ſimilar to that of Beauty. There are two great claſſes of moral qualities; one is of the high and the great virtues, which require extraordinary efforts, and turn upon dangers and ſufferings; as heroiſm, magnanimity, contempt of pleaſures, and contempt of death. Theſe, as I have obſerved in a former Lecture, excite in the ſpectator an emotion of Sublimity and Grandeur. The other claſs is generally of the ſocial virtues, and ſuch as are of a ſofter and gentler kind; as compaſſion, mildneſs, friendſhip, and generoſity. Theſe raiſe in the beholder a ſenſation of pleaſure, ſo much akin to that produced by Beautiful external objects, that, though of a more dignified nature, it may, without impropriety, be claſſed under the ſame head.

A ſpecies of Beauty, diſtinct from any I have yet mentioned, ariſes from deſign or art; or, in other words, from the perception of means being adapted to an end; or the parts of any thing

thing being well fitted to anſwer the deſign of the whole. When, in conſidering the ſtructure of a tree or a plant, we obſerve, how all the parts, the roots, the ſtem, the bark, and the leaves, are ſuited to the growth and nutriment of the whole: much more when we ſurvey all the parts and members of a living animal; or when we examine any of the curious works of art; ſuch as a clock, a ſhip, or any nice machine; the pleaſure which we have in the ſurvey, is wholly founded on this ſenſe of Beauty. It is altogether different from the perception of Beauty produced by colour, figure, variety, or any of the cauſes formerly mentioned. When I look at a watch, for inſtance, the caſe of it, if finely engraved, and of curious workmanſhip, ſtrikes me as beautiful in the former ſenſe; bright colour, exquiſite poliſh, figures finely raiſed and turned. But when I examine the conſtruction of the ſpring and the wheels, and praiſe the Beauty of the internal machinery; my pleaſure then ariſes wholly from the view of that admirable art, with which ſo many various and complicated parts are made to unite for one purpoſe.

This ſenſe of Beauty, in fitneſs and deſign, has an extenſive influence over many of our ideas. It is the foundation of the Beauty which we diſcover in the proportion of doors, windows, arches, pillars, and all the orders of architecture. Let the ornaments of a building be ever ſo fine and elegant in themſelves, yet if they interfere with this ſenſe of fitneſs and deſign, they loſe their Beauty, and hurt the eye, like diſagreeable objects. Twiſted columns, for inſtance, are undoubtedly ornamental; but as they have an appearance of weakneſs, they always diſpleaſe when they are made uſe of to ſupport any part of a building that is maſſy, and that ſeems to require a more ſubſtantial prop. We cannot look upon any work whatever, without being led, by a natural aſſociation of ideas, to think of its end and deſign, and of courſe to examine the propriety of its parts, in relation to this deſign and end. When their propriety is clearly diſcerned, the work ſeems always to have ſome Beauty; but when there is a total want of propriety, it never fails of appearing deformed. Our ſenſe of fitneſs and deſign, therefore, is ſo powerful, and holds ſo high a rank among our perceptions, as to regulate, in a great meaſure, our other ideas of Beauty: An obſervation which I the rather make, as it is of the utmoſt importance, that all who ſtudy compoſition ſhould carefully

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attend to it. For, in an epic poem, a hiſtory, an oration, or any work of genius, we always require, as we do in other works, a fitneſs, or adjuſtment of means, to the end which the author is ſuppoſed to have in view. Let his deſcriptions be ever ſo rich, or his figures ever ſo elegant, yet, if they are out of place, if they are not proper parts of that whole, if they ſuit not the main deſign, they loſe all their Beauty; nay, from Beauties they are converted into Deformities. Such power has our ſenſe of fitneſs and congruity, to produce a total tranſformation of an object whoſe appearance otherwiſe would have been Beautiful.

After having mentioned ſo many various ſpecies of Beauty, it now only remains to take notice of Beauty as it is applied to writing or diſcourſe; a term commonly uſed in a ſenſe altogether looſe and undetermined. For it is applied to all that pleaſes, either in ſtyle or in ſentiment, from whatever principle that pleaſure flows; and a Beautiful poem or oration means, in common language, no other than a good one, or one well compoſed. In this ſenſe, it is plain, the word is altogether indefinite, and points at no particular ſpecies or kind of Beauty. There is, however, another ſenſe, ſomewhat more definite, in which Beauty of writing characteriſes a particular manner; when it is uſed to ſignify a certain grace and amenity in the turn either of ſtyle or ſentiment, for which ſome authors have been peculiarly diſtinguiſhed. In this ſenſe, it denotes a manner neither remarkably Sublime, nor vehemently paſſionate, nor uncommonly ſparkling! but ſuch as raiſes in the reader an emotion of the gentle placid kind, ſimilar to what is raiſed by the contemplation of Beautiful objects in nature; which neither lifts the mind very high, nor agitates it very much, but diffuſes over the imagination an agreeable and pleaſing ſerenity. Mr. Addiſon is a writer altogether of this character; and is one of the moſt proper and preciſe examples that can be given of it. Fenelon, the author of the Adventures of Telemachus, may be given as another example. Virgil too, though very capable of riſing on occaſions into the Sublime, yet, in his general manner, is diſtinguiſhed by the character of Beauty and Grace rather than of Sublimity. Among orators, Cicero has more of the Beautiful than Demoſthenes, whoſe genius led him wholly towards vehemence and ſtrength.

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This much it is ſufficient to have ſaid upon the ſubject of Beauty. We have traced it through a variety of forms; as next to Sublimity, it is the moſt copious ſource of the Pleaſures of Taſte; and as the conſideration of the different appearances, and principles of Beauty, tends to the improvement of Taſte in many ſubjects.

But it is not only by appearing under the forms of Sublime or Beautiful, that objects delight the imagination. From ſeveral other principles alſo, they derive their power of giving it pleaſure.

Novelty, for inſtance, has been mentioned by Mr. Addiſon, and by every writer on this ſubject. An object which has no merit to recommend it, except its being uncommon or new, by means of this quality alone, produces in the mind a vivid and an agreeable emotion. Hence that paſſion of curioſity, which prevails ſo generally among mankind. Objects and ideas which have been long familiar, make too faint an impreſſion to give an agreeable exerciſe to our faculties. New and ſtrange objects rouſe the mind from its dormant ſtate, by giving it a quick and pleaſing impulſe. Hence, in a great meaſure, the entertainment afforded us by fiction and romance. The emotion raiſed by Novelty is of a more lively and pungent nature, than that produced by Beauty; but much ſhorter in its continuance. For if the object have in itſelf no charms to hold our attention, the ſhining gloſs thrown upon it by Novelty ſoon wears off.

Beſides Novelty, Imitation is another ſource of Pleaſure to Taſte. This gives riſe to what Mr. Addiſon terms, the Secondary Pleaſures of Imagination; which form, doubtleſs, a very extenſive claſs. For all Imitation affords ſome pleaſure; not only the Imitation of beautiful or great objects, by recalling the original ideas of Beauty or Grandeur which ſuch objects themſelves exhibited; but even objects which have neither Beauty nor Grandeur, nay, ſome which are terrible or deformed, pleaſe us in a ſecondary or repreſented view.

The Pleaſures of Melody and Harmony belong alſo to Taſte. There is no agreeable ſenſation we receive either from Beauty or Sublimity, but what is capable of being heightened by the

power of musical sound. Whence the delight of poetical numbers; and even of the more concealed and looser measures of prose. Wit, Humour, and Ridicule likewise open a variety of Pleasures to Taste, quite distinct from any that we have yet considered.

At present it is not necessary to pursue any farther the subject of the Pleasures of Taste. I have opened some of the general principles; it is time now to make the application to our chief subject. If the question be put, To what class of those Pleasures of Taste which I have enumerated, that Pleasure is to be referred, which we receive from poetry, eloquence, or fine writing? My answer is, Not to any one, but to them all. This singular advantage, writing and discourse possess, that they encompass so large and rich a field on all sides, and have power to exhibit, in great perfection, not a single set of objects only, but almost the whole of those which give Pleasure to Taste and Imagination; whether that Pleasure arise from Sublimity, from Beauty in its different forms, from Design, and Art, from Moral Sentiment, from Novelty, from Harmony, from Wit, Humour and Ridicule. To whichsoever of these the peculiar bent of a person's Taste lies, from some writer or other, he has it always in his power to receive the gratification of it.

Now this high power which eloquence and poetry possess, of supplying Taste and Imagination with such a wide circle of Pleasures, they derive altogether from their having a greater capacity of Imitation and Description than is possessed by any other art. Of all the means which human ingenuity has contrived for recalling the images of real objects, and awakening, by representation, similar emotions to those which are raised by the original, none is so full and extensive as that which is executed by words and writing. Through the assistance of this happy invention, there is nothing, either in the natural or moral world, but what can be represented and set before the mind, in colours very strong and lively. Hence it is usual among critical writers, to speak of Discourse as the chief of all the imitative or mimetic arts; they compare it with painting and with sculpture, and in many respects prefer it justly before them.

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This ſtyle was firſt introduced by Ariſtotle in his Poetics; and ſince his time, has acquired a general currency among modern authors. But as it is of conſequence to introduce as much preciſion as poſſible into critical language, I muſt obſerve, that this manner of ſpeaking is not accurate. Neither diſcourſe in general, nor poetry in particular, can be called altogether imitative arts. We muſt diſtinguiſh betwixt Imitation and Deſcription, which are ideas that ſhould not be confounded. Imitation is performed by means of ſomewhat that has a natural likeneſs and reſemblance to the thing imitated, and of conſequence is underſtood by all: ſuch are ſtatues and pictures. Deſcription, again, is the raiſing in the mind the conception of an object by means of ſome arbitrary or inſtituted ſymbols, underſtood only by thoſe who agree in the inſtitution of them; ſuch are words and writing. Words have no natural reſemblance to the ideas or objects which they are employed to ſignify; but a ſtatue or a picture has a natural likeneſs to the original. And therefore Imitation and Deſcription differ conſiderably in their nature from each other.

As far, indeed, as a poet or a hiſtorian introduces into his work perſons actually ſpeaking; and by the words which he puts into their mouths, repreſents the diſcourſe which they might be ſuppoſed to hold; ſo far his art may more accurately be called Imitative: and this is the caſe in all dramatic compoſition. But in Narrative or Deſcriptive works, it can with no propriety be called ſo. Who, for inſtance, would call Virgil's Deſcription of a tempeſt, in the firſt Æneid, an Imitation of a ſtorm? If we heard of the Imitation of a battle, we might naturally think of ſome mock fight, or repreſentation of a battle on the ſtage, but would never apprehend, that it meant one of Homer's Deſcriptions in the Iliad. I admit, at the ſame time, that Imitation and Deſcription agree in their principal effect, of recalling by external ſigns, the ideas of things which we do not ſee. But though in this they coincide, yet it ſhould not be forgotten, that the terms themſelves are not ſynonimous; that they import different means of effecting the

the ſame end; and of courſe make different impreſſions on the mind.*)

Whether we conſider Poetry in particular, and Diſcourſe in general, as Imitative or Deſcriptive; it is evident, that their whole power, in recalling the impreſſions of real objects is derived from the ſignificancy of words. As their excellency flows altogether from this ſource, we muſt, in order to make way for further inquiries, begin at this fountain head. I ſhall, therefore, in the next Lecture, enter upon the conſideration of Language: of the origin, the progreſs, and conſtruction of which, I purpoſe to treat at ſome length.

LECTURE

* Though, in the execution of particular parts, Poetry is certainly Deſcriptive rather than Imitative, yet there is a qualified ſenſe in which Poetry, in the general, may be termed an Imitative art. The ſubject of the poet (as Dr. Gerard has ſhown in the Appendix to his Eſſay on Taſte) is intended to be an imitation, not of things really exiſting, but of the courſe of nature; that is, a feigned repreſentation of ſuch events, or ſuch ſcenes, as though they never had a being, yet might have exiſted; and which, therefore, by their probability, bear a reſemblance to nature. It was probably, in this ſenſe, that Ariſtotle termed Poetry a mimetic art. How far either the Imitation or the Deſcription which Poetry employs, is ſuperior to the imitative powers of Painting and Muſic, is well ſhown by Mr. Harris, in his Treatiſe on Muſic, Painting, and Poetry. The chief advantage which Poetry, or Diſcourſe in general, enjoys is, that whereas, by the nature of his art, the painter is confined to the repreſentation of a ſingle moment, writing and diſcourſe can trace a tranſaction through its whole progreſs. That moment, indeed, which the painter pitches upon for the ſubject of his picture, he may be ſaid to exhibit with more advantage than the poet or the orator; inaſmuch as he ſets before us, in one view, all the minute concurrent circumſtances of the event which happen in one individual point of time, as they appear in nature: while Diſcourſe is obliged to exhibit them in ſucceſſion, and by means of a detail which is in danger of becoming tedious, in order to be clear; or if not tedious, is in danger of being obſcure. But to that point of time which he has choſen, the painter being entirely confined, he cannot exhibit various ſtages of the ſame action or event; and he is ſubject to this farther defect, that he can only exhibit objects as they appear to the eye, and can very imperfectly delineate characters and ſentiments, which are the nobleſt ſubjects of Imitation or Deſcription. The power of repreſenting theſe with full advantage, gives a high ſuperiority to Diſcourſe and Writing above all other imitative arts.

LECTURE VI.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE.

HAVING finiſhed my obſervations on the Pleaſures of Taſte, which were meant to be introductory to the principal ſubject of theſe Lectures, I now begin to treat of Language; which is the foundation of the whole power of eloquence. This will lead to a conſiderable diſcuſſion; and there are few ſubjects belonging to polite literature, which more merit ſuch a diſcuſſion. I ſhall firſt give a Hiſtory of the Riſe and Progreſs of Language in ſeveral particulars, from its early to its more advanced periods; which ſhall be followed by a ſimilar Hiſtory of the Riſe and Progreſs of Writing. I ſhall next give ſome account of the Conſtruction of Language, or the Principles of Univerſal Grammar; and ſhall, laſtly, apply theſe obſervations more particularly to the Engliſh Tongue.*

Language, in general, ſignifies the expreſſion of our ideas by certain articulate ſounds, which are uſed as the ſigns of thoſe ideas. By articulate ſounds, are meant thoſe modulations of ſimple voice or of ſound emitted from the thorax, which are formed by means of the mouth and its ſeveral organs, the teeth, the tongue, the lips, and the palate. How far there is any natural connexion between the ideas of the mind and the ſounds emitted, will appear from what I am afterwards to offer. But as the natural connexion can, upon any ſyſtem, affect only a ſmall

* See Dr. Adam Smith's Diſſertation on the Formation of Languages.—Treatiſe of the Origin and Progreſs of Language, in 3 vols.—Harris's Hermes, or a Philoſophical Inquiry concerning Language and Univerſal Grammar.—Eſſai ſur l'Origine des Connoiſſances Humaines, par l'Abbé Condillac.—Principes de Grammaire, par Marſais.—Grammaire Generale & Raiſonnée.—Traité de la Formation Mechanique des Langues, par le Preſident de Broſſes.—Diſcours ſur l'Inegalité parmi les Hommes, par Rouſſeau.—Grammaire Generale, par Beauzee.—Principes de la Traduction, par Batteux.—Warburton's Divine Legation of Moſes, vol. iii.—Sanctii Minerva, cum notis Perizonii.—Les Vrais principes de la Langue Françoiſe, par l'Abbe Girard.

ſmall part of the fabric of Language; the connexion between words and ideas may, in general, be conſidered as arbitrary and conventional, owing to the agreement of men among themſelves; the clear proof of which is, that different nations have different Languages, or a different ſet of articulate ſounds, which they have choſen for communicating their ideas.

This artificial method of communicating thought, we now behold carried to the higheſt perfection. Language is become a vehicle by which the moſt delicate and refined emotions of one mind can be tranſmitted, or, if we may ſo ſpeak, transfuſed into another. Not only are names given to all objects around us, by which means an eaſy and ſpeedy intercourſe is carried on for providing the neceſſaries of life, but all the relations and differences among theſe objects are minutely marked, the inviſible ſentiments of the mind are deſcribed, the moſt abſtract notions and conceptions are rendered intelligible; and all the ideas which ſcience can diſcover, or imagination create, are known by their proper names. Nay, Language has been carried ſo far, as to be made an inſtrument of the moſt refined luxury. Not reſting in mere perſpicuity, we require ornament alſo; not ſatisfied with having the conceptions of others made known to us, we make a farther demand, to have them ſo decked and adorned as to entertain our fancy; and this demand, it is found very poſſible to gratify. In this ſtate, we now find Language. In this ſtate, it has been found among many nations for ſome thouſand years. The object is become familiar; and, like the expanſe of the firmament, and, other great objects, which we are accuſtomed to behold, we behold it without wonder.

But carry your thoughts back to the firſt dawn of Language among men. Reflect upon the feeble beginnings from which it muſt have ariſen, and upon the many and great obſtacles which it muſt have encountered in its progreſs; and you will find reaſon for the higheſt aſtoniſhment, on viewing the height which it has now attained. We admire ſeveral of the inventions of art; we plume ourſelves on ſome diſcoveries which have been made in latter ages, ſerving to advance knowledge, and to render life comfortable; we ſpeak of them as the boaſt of human reaſon. But certainly no invention is entitled to any ſuch degree of admiration as that of Language; which,

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too, must have been the product of the first and rudest ages, if indeed it can be considered as a human invention at all.

Think of the circumstances of mankind when Languages began to be formed. They were a wandering scattered race; no society among them except families; and the family society too very imperfect, as their method of living by hunting or pasturage must have separated them frequently from one another. In this situation, when so much divided, and their intercourse so rare, How could any one set of sounds, or words, be generally agreed on as the signs of their ideas? Supposing that a few, whom chance or necessity threw together agreed by some means upon certain signs, yet by what authority could these be propagated among other tribes or families, so as to spread and grow up into a Language? One would think, that in order to any Language fixing and extending itself, men must have been previously gathered together in considerable numbers: society must have been already far advanced; and yet, on the other hand, there seems to have been an absolute necessity for Speech, previous to the formation of Society. For, by what bond could any multitude of men be kept together, or be made to join in the prosecution of any common interest, until once, by the intervention of Speech, they could communicate their wants and intentions to each other? So that, either how Society could form itself, previously to Language; or how words could rise into a Language, previously to Society formed, seem to be points attended with equal difficulty. And when we consider farther, that curious analogy which prevails in the construction of almost all Languages, and that deep and subtile logic on which they are founded, difficulties increase so much upon us, on all hands, that there seems to be no small reason for referring the first origin of all Language to divine teaching or inspiration.

But supposing Language to have a Divine original, we cannot, however, suppose, that a perfect system of it was all at once given to man. It is much more natural to think, that God taught our first parents only such Language as suited their present occasions; leaving them, as he did in other things, to enlarge and improve it as their future necessities should require. Consequently, those first rudiments of Speech must have been

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poor and narrow; and we are at full liberty to inquire in what manner, and by what ſteps, Language advanced to the ſtate in which we now find it. The hiſtory which I am to give of this progreſs, will ſuggeſt ſeveral things, both curious in themſelves, and uſeful in our future diſquiſitions.

If we ſhould ſuppoſe a period before any words were invented or known, it is clear, that men could have no other method of communicating to others what they felt, than by the cries of paſſion, accompanied with ſuch motions and geſtures as were farther expreſſive of paſſion. For theſe are the only ſigns which nature teaches all men, and which are underſtood by all. One who ſaw another going into ſome place where he himſelf had been frightened, or expoſed to danger, and who ſought to warn his neighbour of the danger, could contrive no other way of doing ſo, than by uttering thoſe cries, and making thoſe geſtures, which are the ſigns of fear: juſt as two men, at this day, would endeavour to make themſelves be underſtood by each other, who ſhould be thrown together on a deſolate iſland, ignorant of one another's Language. Thoſe exclamations, therefore, which by grammarians are called Interjections, uttered in a ſtrong and paſſionate manner, were, beyond doubt, the firſt elements or beginnings of Speech.

When more enlarged communication became neceſſary, and names began to be aſſigned to objects, in what manner can we ſuppoſe men to have proceeded in this aſſignation of names, or invention of words? Undoubtedly, by imitating, as much as they could, the nature of the object which they named, by the ſound of the name which they gave to it. As a painter who would repreſent graſs, muſt employ green colour; ſo, in the beginnings of Language, one giving a name to any thing harſh and boiſterous, would of courſe employ a harſh or boiſterous ſound. He could not do otherwiſe, if he meant to excite in the hearer the idea of that thing which he ſought to name. To ſuppoſe words invented, or names given to things, in a manner purely arbitrary, without any ground or reaſon, is to ſuppoſe an effect without a cauſe. There muſt have always been ſome motive which led to the aſſignation of one name rather than another; and we can conceive no motive which would more univerſally operate upon men in their firſt efforts towards

towards Language, than a desire to paint by Speech, the objects which they named, in a manner more or less complete, according as the vocal organs had it in their power to effect this imitation.

Wherever objects were to be named, in which sound, noise, or motion were concerned, the imitation by words was abundantly obvious. Nothing was more natural, than to imitate, by the sound of the voice, the quality of the sound or noise which any external object made; and to form its name accordingly. Thus, in all Languages, we find a multitude of words that are evidently constructed upon this principle. A certain bird is termed the Cuckoo, from the sound which it emits. When one sort of wind is said to *whistle*, and another to *roar*; when a serpent is said to *hiss*; a fly to *buz*, and falling timber to *crash*; when a stream is said to *flow*, and hail to *rattle*; the analogy between the word and the thing signified is plainly discernible.

In the names of objects which address the sight only, where neither noise nor motion are concerned, and still more in the terms appropriated to moral ideas, this analogy appears to fail. Many learned men, however, have been of opinion, that though, in such cases, it becomes more obscure, yet it is not altogether lost; but that throughout the radical words of all Languages, there may be traced some degree of correspondence with the object signified. With regard to moral and intellectual ideas, they remark, that, in every Language, the terms significant of them, are derived from the names of sensible objects to which they are conceived to be analogous; and with regard to sensible objects pertaining merely to sight, they remark, that their most distinguishing qualities have certain radical sounds appropriated to the expression of them, in a great variety of Languages. Stability, for instance, fluidity, hollowness, smoothness, gentleness, violence, &c. they imagine to be painted by the sound of certain letters or syllables, which have some relation to those different states of visible objects, on account of an obscure resemblance which the organs of voice are capable of assuming to such external qualities. By this natural mechanism, they

imagine all Languages to have been at firſt conſtructed, and the roots of their capital words formed.*

As far as this ſyſtem is founded in truth, Language appears to be not altogether arbitrary in its origin. Among the ancient Stoic and Platonic Philoſophers, it was a queſtion much agitated, "Utrum nomina rerum ſint naturâ, an impoſitione?" φυσει θεσει; by which they meant, Whether words were merely conventional ſymbols; of the riſe of which no account could be given, except the pleaſure of the firſt inventors of Language? or, Whether there was ſome principle in nature that led to the aſſignation of particular names to particular objects; and thoſe of the Platonic ſchool favoured the latter opinion?†

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* The Author, who has carried his ſpeculations on this ſubject the fartheſt, is the Preſident Des Broſſes, in his "Traité de la Formation Mechanique des "Langues." Some of the radical letters or ſyllables which he ſuppoſes to carry this expreſſive power in moſt known Languages are, St, to ſignify ſtability or reſt; Fl, to denote fluency; Cl, a gentle deſcent; R, what relates to rapid motion; C, to cavity or hollowneſs, &c. A century before his time, Dr. Waſlis, in his Grammar of the Engliſh Language, had taken notice of theſe ſignificant roots, and repreſented it as a peculiar excellency of our Tongue, that, beyond all others, it expreſſed the nature of the objects which it names, by employing ſounds ſharper, ſofter, weaker, ſtronger, more obſcure, or more ſtridulous, according as the idea which is to be ſuggeſted requires. He gives various examples. Thus, words formed upon St, always denote firmneſs and ſtrength, analogous to the Latin *ſto*; as, ſtand, ſtay, ſtaff, ſtop, ſtout, ſteady, ſtake, ſtamp, *ſtallion*, ſtately, &c. Words beginning with Str, intimate violent force and energy, analogous to the Greek στρονυμι; as, ſtrive, ſtrength, ſtrike, ſtripe, ſtreſs, ſtruggle, ſtride, ſtretch, ſtrip, &c. Thr, implies forcible motion; as, throw, throb, thruſt, through, threaten, thraldom. Wr, obloquy or diſtortion; as, wry, wreſt, wreath, wreſtle, wring, wrong, wrangle, wrath, wrack, &c. Sw, ſilent agitation, or lateral motion; as, ſway, ſwing, ſwerve, ſweep, ſwim. Sl, a gentle fall or leſs obſervable motion; as, ſlide, ſlip, ſly, ſlit, ſlow, ſlack, ſling. Sp, diſſipation or expanſion; as, ſpread, ſprout, ſprinkle, ſplit, ſpill, ſpring. Terminations in aſh, indicate ſomething acting nimbly and ſharply; as, craſh, gaſh, raſh, flaſh, laſh, ſlaſh. Terminations in uſh, ſomething acting more obtuſely and dully; as, cruſh, bruſh, huſh, guſh, bluſh. The learned Author produces a great many more examples of the ſame kind, which ſeem to leave no doubt, that the analogies of ſound have had ſome influence on the formation of words. At the ſame time, in all ſpeculations of this kind, there is ſo much room for fancy to operate, that they ought to be adopted with much caution in forming any general theory.

† Vid. Plat. in Cratylo. "Nomina verbaque non poſita fortuito, ſed quadam vi & ratione naturæ facta eſſe, P. Nigidius in Grammaticis Commentariis docet; rem ſane in philoſophiæ diſſertationibus celebrem. In eam "rem multa argumenta dicit, cur videri poſſint verba eſſe naturalia, magis "quam arbitraria. *Vos*, inquit, cum dicimus, motu quodam oris conveniente, "cum ipſius verbi demonſtratione utimur, & labias ſenſim primores emovemus, ac ſpiritum atque animam porro verſum, & ad eos quibus conſermocinamur intendimus. At contra cum dicimus *Nos*, neque profuſo intento"que ſiatu vocis, neque projectis labiis pronunciamus; ſed et ſpiritum et labias

"quaſi

This principle, however, of a natural relation between words and objects, can only be applied to Language in its moſt ſimple and primitive ſtate. Though in every Tongue, ſome remains of it, as I have ſhewn above, can be traced, it were utterly in vain to ſearch for it throughout the whole conſtruction of any modern Language. As the multitude of terms increaſe in every nation, and the immenſe field of Language is filled up, words, by a thouſand fanciful and irregular methods of derivation and compoſition, come to deviate widely from the primitive character of their roots, and to loſe all analogy or reſemblance in ſound to the things ſignified. In this ſtate we now find Language. Words, as we now employ them, taken in the general, may be conſidered as ſymbols, not as imitations; as arbitrary, or conſtituted, not natural ſigns of ideas. But there can be no doubt, I think, that Language, the nearer we remount to its riſe among men, will be found to partake more of a natural expreſſion. As it could be originally formed on nothing but imitation, it would, in its primitive ſtate, be more pictureſque; much more barren indeed, and narrow in the circle of its terms, than now; but ſo far as it went, more expreſſive by ſound of the thing ſignified. This, then, may be aſſumed as one character of the firſt ſtate, or beginnings, of Language, among every ſavage tribe.

A ſecond character of Language, in its early ſtate, is drawn from the manner in which words were at firſt pronounced, or uttered, by men. Interjections, I ſhowed, or paſſionate exclamations, were the firſt elements of Speech. Men laboured to communicate their feelings to one another, by thoſe expreſſive cries and geſtures which nature taught them. After words, or names of objects, began to be invented, this mode of ſpeaking, by natural ſigns, could not be all at once diſuſed. For Language, in its infancy, muſt have been extremely barren; and there certainly was a period among all rude nations, when converſation was carried on by a very few words, intermixed with

"quaſi intra noſmet ipſos coërcemus. Hoc fit idem et in eo quod dicimus, "*tu*, & *ego*, & *mihi*, & *tibi*. Nam ſicuti cum adnuimus & abnuimus, motus "quodam illo vel capitis, vel oculorum, a natura rei quam ſignificat, non "abhorret, ita in his vocibus quaſi geſtus quidam oris & ſpiritus naturalis eſt, "Eadem ratio eſt in Græcis quoque vocibus quam eſſe in noſtris animadver-"timus." A. GELLIUS, Noct. Atticæ, lib. x. cap. 4.

with many exclamations and earneſt geſtures. The ſmall ſtock of words which men as yet poſſeſſed, rendered thoſe helps abſolutely neceſſary for explaining their conceptions; and rude, uncultivated men, not having always at hand even the few words which they knew, would naturally labour to make themſelves underſtood, by varying their tone of voice, and accompanying their tones with the moſt ſignificant geſticulations they could make. At this day, when perſons attempt to ſpeak in any Language which they poſſeſs imperfectly, they have recourſe to all theſe ſupplemental methods, in order to render themſelves more intelligible. The plan too, according to which I have ſhown, that Language was originally conſtructed, upon reſemblance or analogy, as far as was poſſible, to the thing ſignified, would naturally lead men to utter their words with more emphaſis and force, as long as Language was a ſort of painting by means of ſound. For all thoſe reaſons this may be aſſumed as a principle, that the pronunciation of the earlieſt Languages was accompanied with more geſticulation, and with more and greater inflexions of voice, than what we now uſe; there was more action in it; and it was more upon a crying or ſinging tone.

To this manner of ſpeaking, neceſſity firſt gave riſe. But we muſt obſerve, that, after this neceſſity had, in a great meaſure, ceaſed, by Language becoming, in proceſs of time, more extenſive and copious, the ancient manner of Speech ſtill ſubſiſted among many nations; and what had ariſen from neceſſity, continued to be uſed for ornament. Wherever there was ſuch fire and vivacity in the genius of nations, they were naturally inclined to a mode of converſation which gratified the imagination ſo much; for, an imagination which is warm, is always prone to throw both a great deal of action, and a variety of tones, into diſcourſe. Upon this principle, Dr. Warburton accounts for ſo much ſpeaking by action, as we find among the Old Teſtament prophets; as when Jeremiah breaks the potter's veſſel, in ſight of the people; throws a book into the Euphrates; puts on bonds and yokes; and carries out his houſehold ſtuff; all which, he imagines might be ſignificant modes of expreſſion, very natural in thoſe ages, when men were accuſtomed to explain themſelves ſo much by actions

and

and geſtures. In like manner, among the northern American tribes, certain motions and actions were found to be much uſed as explanatory of their meaning, on all their great occaſions of intercourſe with each other; and by the belts and ſtrings of wampum, which they gave and received, they were accuſtomed to declare their meaning, as much as by their diſcourſes.

With regard to inflections of voice, theſe are ſo natural, that to ſome nations, it has appeared eaſier to expreſs different ideas, by varying the tone with which they pronounced the ſame word, than to contrive words for all their ideas. This is the practice of the Chineſe in particular. The number of words in their Language is ſaid not to be great; but, in ſpeaking, they vary each of their words on no leſs than five different tones, by which they make the ſame word ſignify five different things. This muſt give a great appearance of muſic or ſinging to their Speech. For thoſe inflexions of voice which, in the infancy of Language, were no more than harſh or diſſonant cries, muſt, as Language gradually poliſhes, paſs into more ſmooth and muſical ſounds; and hence is formed, what we call, the Proſody of a Language.

It is remarkable, and deſerves attention that, both in the Greek and Roman Languages, this muſical and geſticulating pronunciation was retained in a very high degree. Without having attended to this, we will be at a loſs in underſtanding ſeveral paſſages of the claſſics, which relate to the public ſpeaking, and the theatrical entertainments, of the ancients. It appears from many circumſtances, that the proſody both of the Greeks and Romans, was carried much farther than ours; or that they ſpoke with more and ſtronger inflexions of voice than we uſe. The quantity of their ſyllables was much more fixed than in any of the modern Languages, and rendered much more ſenſible to the ear in pronouncing them. Beſides quantities, or the difference of ſhort and long accents were placed upon ſyllables, the acute, grave, and circumflex; the uſe of which accents we have now entirely loſt, but which, we know, determined the ſpeaker's voice to raiſe or fall. Our modern pronunciation muſt have appeared to them a lifeleſs monotony. The declamation of their orators, and the pronunciation of their actors upon the ſtage, approached to the nature of recitative in muſic; was capable

of being marked in notes, and ſupported with inſtruments; as ſeveral learned men have fully proved. And if this was the caſe, as they have ſhown, among the Romans, the Greeks, it is well known, were ſtill a more muſical people than the Romans, and carried their attention to tone and pronunciation much farther in every public exhibition. Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, conſiders the muſic of Tragedy as one of its chief and moſt eſſential parts.

The caſe was parallel with regard to geſtures: for ſtrong tones, and animated geſtures, we may obſerve, always go together. Action is treated of by all the ancient critics, as the chief quality in every public ſpeaker. The action, both of the orators and the players in Greece and Rome, was far more vehement than what we are accuſtomed to. Roſcius would have ſeemed a madman to us. Geſture was of ſuch conſequence upon the ancient ſtage, that there is reaſon for believing, that, on ſome occaſions, the ſpeaking and the acting part were divided, which, according to our ideas, would form a ſtrange exhibition; one player ſpoke the words in the proper tones, while another performed the correſponding motions and geſtures. We learn from Cicero, that it was a conteſt between him and Roſcius, whether he could expreſs a ſentiment in a greater variety of phraſes, or Roſcius in a greater variety of intelligible ſignificant geſtures. At laſt, geſture came to engroſs the ſtage wholly; for, under the reigns of Auguſtus and Tiberius, the favourite entertainment of the public was the pantomime, which was carried on entirely by mute geſticulation. The people were moved, and wept at it, as much as at tragedies; and the paſſion for it became ſo ſtrong, that laws were obliged to be made, for reſtraining the ſenators from ſtudying the pantomime art. Now, though in declamations and theatrical exhibitions, both tone and geſture were, doubtleſs, carried much farther than in common diſcourſe; yet public ſpeaking, of any kind, muſt, in every country, bear ſome proportion to the manner that is uſed in converſation; and ſuch public entertainments as I have now mentioned, could never have been reliſhed by a nation, whoſe tones and geſtures, in diſcourſe, were as languid as ours.

When the Barbarians ſpread themſelves over the Roman empire, theſe more phlegmatic nations did not retain the accents, the tones and geſtures, which neceſſity at firſt introduced, and

cuſtom

cuſtom and fancy afterwards ſo long ſupported, in the Greek and Roman Languages. As the Latin Tongue was loſt in their idioms, ſo the character of ſpeech and pronunciation began to be changed throughout Europe. Nothing of the ſame attention was paid to the muſic of Language, or to the pomp of declamation, and theatrical action. Both converſation and public ſpeaking became more ſimple and plain, ſuch as we now find it; without that enthuſiaſtic mixture of tones and geſtures, which diſtinguiſhed the ancient nations. At the reſtoration of letters, the genius of Language was ſo much altered, and the manners of the people had become ſo different, that it was no eaſy matter to underſtand what the Ancients had ſaid, concerning their declamations and public ſpectacles. Our plain manner of ſpeaking, in theſe northern countries, expreſſes the paſſions with ſufficient energy, to move thoſe who are not accuſtomed to any more vehement manner. But, undoubtedly, more varied tones, and more animated motions, carry a natural expreſſion of warmer feelings. Accordingly, in different modern Languages, the proſody of ſpeech partakes more of muſic, in proportion to the livelineſs and ſenſibility of the people. A Frenchman both varies his accents, and geſticulates, while he ſpeaks, much more than an Engliſhman. An Italian, a great deal more than either. Muſical pronunciation and expreſſive geſture are, to this day, the diſtinction of Italy.

From the pronunciation of Language, let us proceed, in the third place, to conſider the Style of Language in its moſt early ſtate, and its progreſs in this reſpect alſo. As the manner in which men firſt uttered their words, and maintained converſation, was ſtrong and expreſſive, enforcing their imperfectly expreſſed ideas by cries and geſtures; ſo the Language which they uſed, could be no other than full of figures and metaphors, not correct indeed, but forcible and pictureſque.

We are apt, upon a ſuperficial view, to imagine, that thoſe modes of expreſſion which are called Figures of Speech, are among the chief refinements of Speech, not invented till after Language had advanced to its later periods, and mankind were brought into a poliſhed ſtate; and that, then, they were deviſed by orators and rhetoricians. The quite contrary of this is the truth. Mankind never employed ſo many figures of Speech, as when they had hardly any words for expreſſing their meaning.

For

For, firſt, the want of proper names for every object, obliged them to uſe one name for many; and, of courſe, to expreſs themſelves by compariſons, metaphors, alluſions, and all thoſe ſubſtituted forms of Speech which render Language figurative. Next, as the objects with which they were moſt converſant, were the ſenſible, material objects around them, names would be given to thoſe objects long before words were invented for ſignifying the diſpoſitions of the mind, or any ſort of moral and intellectual ideas. Hence, the early Language of men being entirely made up of words deſcriptive of ſenſible objects, it became of neceſſity extremely metaphorical. For, to ſignify any deſire or paſſion, or any act or feeling of the mind, they had no preciſe expreſſion which was appropriated to that purpoſe, but were under a neceſſity of painting the emotion or paſſion which they felt, by alluſion to thoſe ſenſible objects which had moſt relation to it, and which could render it, in ſome ſort, viſible to others.

But it was not neceſſity alone, that gave riſe to this figured ſtyle. Other circumſtances alſo, at the commencement of Language, contributed to it. In the infancy of all ſocieties, men are much under the dominion of imagination and paſſion. They live ſcattered and diſperſed; they are unacquainted with the courſe of things; they are, every day, meeting with new and ſtrange objects. Fear and ſurpriſe, wonder and aſtoniſhment, are their moſt frequent paſſions. Their Language will neceſſarily partake of this character of their minds. They will be prone to exaggeration and hyperbole. They will be given to deſcribe every thing with the ſtrongeſt colours, and moſt vehement expreſſions; infinitely more than men living in the advanced and cultivated periods of Society, when their imaginations are more chaſtened, their paſſions are more tamed, and a wider experience has rendered the objects of life more familiar to them. Even the manner in which I before ſhewed that the firſt tribes of men uttered their words, would have conſiderable influence on their ſtyle. Wherever ſtrong exclamations, tones, and geſtures, enter much into converſation, the imagination is always more exerciſed; a greater effort of fancy and paſſion is excited. Conſequently, the fancy kept awake, and rendered more ſprightly by this mode of utterance, operates upon ſtyle, and enlivens it more.

Theſe

Theſe reaſonings are confirmed by undoubted facts. The ſtyle of all the moſt early Languages, among nations who are in the firſt and rude periods of Society, is found, without exception, to be full of figures; hyperbolical and pictureſque in a high degree. We have a ſtriking inſtance of this in the American Languages, which are known, by the moſt authentic accounts, to be figurative to exceſs. The Iroquois and Illinois carry on their treaties and public tranſactions with bolder metaphors, and greater pomp of ſtyle, than we uſe in our poetical productions.*

Another remarkable inſtance is, the ſtyle of the Old Teſtament, which is carried on by conſtant alluſions to ſenſible objects. Iniquity, or guilt, is expreſſed by "a ſpotted garment;" miſery, by "drinking the cup of aſtoniſhment;" vain purſuits, by "feeding on aſhes;" a ſinful life, by "a crooked path;" proſperity, by "the candle of the Lord ſhining on our head;" and the like, in innumerable inſtances. Hence, we have been accuſtomed to call this ſort of ſtyle the Oriental Style; as fancying it to be peculiar to the nations of the Eaſt: Whereas, from the American Style, and from many other inſtances, it plainly appears not to have been peculiar to any one region or climate; but to have been common to all nations, in certain periods of Society and Language.

Hence,

* Thus, to give an inſtance of the ſingular ſtyle of theſe nations, the Five Nations of Canada when entering on a treaty of peace with us, expreſſed themſelves by their chiefs, in the following language: "We are happy in having "buried under ground the red axe, that has ſo often been dyed with the blood "of our brethren. Now, in this ſort, we inter the axe, and plant the tree of "Peace. We plant a tree, whoſe top will reach the Sun, and its branches "ſpread abroad, ſo that it ſhall be ſeen afar off. May its growth never be ſtifled "and choked; but may it ſhade both your country and ours with its leaves! "Let us make faſt its roots, and extend them to the utmoſt of your colonies. "If the French ſhould come to ſhake this tree, we would know it by the motion "of its roots reaching into our country. May the Great Spirit allow us to reſt "in tranquillity upon our mats, and never again dig up the axe to cut down "the tree of Peace! Let the earth be trod hard over it, where it lies buried. "Let a ſtrong ſtream run under the pit, to waſh the evil away out of our ſight "and remembrance. The fire that had long burned in Albany is extinguiſhed. "The bloody bed is waſhed clean, and the tears are wiped from our eyes. "We now renew the covenant chain of friendſhip. Let it be kept bright "and clean as ſilver, and not ſuffered to contract any ruſt. Let not any one "pull away his arm from it." Theſe paſſages are extracted from Cadwallader Colden's Hiſtory of the Five Indian Nations, where it appears, from the authentic documents he produces, that ſuch is their genuine ſtyle.

Hence, we may receive ſome light concerning that ſeeming paradox, that Poetry is more ancient than Proſe. I ſhall have occaſion to diſcuſs this point fully hereafter, when I come to treat of the Nature and Origin of Poetry. At preſent, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that from what has been ſaid it plainly appears, that the ſtyle of all Language muſt have been originally poetical; ſtrongly tinctured with that enthuſiaſm, and that deſcriptive, metaphorical expreſſion, which diſtinguiſhes Poetry.

As Language, in its progreſs, began to grow more copious, it gradually loſt that figurative ſtyle, which was its early character. When men were furniſhed with proper and familiar names for every object, both ſenſible and moral, they were not obliged to uſe ſo many circumlocutions. Style became more preciſe, and, of courſe, more ſimple. Imagination, too, in proportion as Society advanced, had leſs influence over mankind. The vehement manner of ſpeaking by tones and geſtures, became not ſo univerſal. The underſtanding was more exerciſed; the fancy leſs. Intercourſe among mankind becoming more extenſive and frequent, clearneſs of ſtyle, in ſignifying their meaning to each other, was the chief object of attention. In place of poets, philoſophers became the inſtructors of men; and, in their reaſonings on all different ſubjects, introduced that plainer and ſimpler ſtyle of compoſition, which we now call Proſe. Among the Greeks, Pherecydes of Scyros, the maſter of Pythagoras, is recorded to have been the firſt, who, in this ſenſe, compoſed any writing in Proſe. The ancient metaphorical and poetical dreſs of Language, was now laid aſide from the intercourſe of men, and reſerved for thoſe occaſions only, on which ornament was profeſſedly ſtudied.

Thus I have purſued the Hiſtory of Language through ſome of the variations it has undergone: I have conſidered it, in the firſt ſtructure, and compoſition, of words; in the manner of uttering or pronouncing words; and in the ſtyle and character of Speech. I have yet to conſider it in another view, reſpecting the order and arrangement of words; when we ſhall find a progreſs to have taken place, ſimilar to what I have been now illuſtrating.

LECTURE

LECTURE VII.

RISE AND PROGRESS OF LANGUAGE, AND OF WRITING.

WHEN we attend to the order in which words are arranged in a ſentence, or ſignificant propoſition, we find a very remarkable difference between the ancient and the modern Tongues. The conſideration of this will ſerve to unfold farther the genius of Language, and to ſhow the cauſes of thoſe alterations, which it has undergone, in the progreſs of Society.

In order to conceive diſtinctly the nature of that alteration of which I now ſpeak, let us go back, as we did formerly, to the moſt early period of Language. Let us figure to ourſelves a Savage, who beholds ſome object, ſuch as fruit, which raiſes his deſire, and who requeſts another to give it to him. Suppoſing our Savage to be unacquainted with words, he would in that caſe, labour to make himſelf be underſtood, by pointing earneſtly at the object which he deſired, and uttering at the ſame time a paſſionate cry. Suppoſing him to have acquired words, the firſt word which he uttered would, of courſe, be the name of that object. He would not expreſs himſelf, according to our Engliſh order of conſtruction, "Give me fruit;" but according to the Latin order, "Fruit give me;" "Fructum da mihi:" for this plain reaſon, that his attention was wholly directed towards fruit, the deſired object. This was the exciting idea; the object which moved him to ſpeak; and, of courſe, would be the firſt named. Such an arrangement is preciſely putting into words the geſture which nature taught the Savage to make, before he was acquainted with words; and therefore it may be depended upon as certain, that he would fall moſt readily into this arrangement.

Accuſtomed now to a different method of ordering our words, we call this an inverſion, and conſider it as a forced and unnatural

unnatural order of Speech. But though not the moſt logical, it is, however, in one view, the moſt natural order; becauſe, it is the order ſuggeſted by imagination and deſire, which always impel us to mention their object in the firſt place. We might therefore conclude, *a priori*, that this would be the order in which words were moſt commonly arranged at the beginnings of Language; and accordingly we find, in fact, that, in this order, words are arranged in moſt of the ancient Tongues; as in the Greek and the Latin; and it is ſaid alſo, in the Ruſſian, the Sclavonic, the Gäelic, and ſeveral of the American Tongues.

In the Latin Language, the arrangement which moſt commonly obtains, is, to place firſt in the ſentence, that word which expreſſes the principal object of the diſcourſe, together with its circumſtances; and afterwards, the perſon or the thing that acts upon it. Thus Salluſt, comparing together the mind and the body; "Animi imperio, corporis ſervitio, magis utimur;" which order certainly renders the ſentence more lively and ſtriking, than when it is arranged according to our Engliſh conſtruction; "We make moſt uſe of the direction of the ſoul, "and of the ſervice of the body." The Latin order gratifies more the rapidity of the imagination, which naturally runs firſt to that which is its chief object; and having once named it, carries it in view throughout the reſt of the ſentence. In the ſame manner in poetry:

> Juſtum & tenacem propoſiti virum,
> Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
> Non vultus inſtantis tyranni,
> Mente quatit ſolida.———

Every perſon of taſte muſt be ſenſible, that here the words are arranged with a much greater regard to the figure which the ſeveral objects make in the fancy, than our Engliſh conſtruction admits; which would require the "Juſtum & tenacem propoſi- "ti virum," though, undoubtedly, the capital object in the ſentence, to be thrown into the laſt place.

I have ſaid, that, in the Greek and Roman Languages, the moſt common arrangement is, to place that firſt which ſtrikes the imagination of the ſpeaker moſt. I do not, however, pretend, that this holds without exception. Sometimes regard to the harmony of the period requires a different order; and in Languages ſuſceptible of ſo much muſical beauty, and pronounced

nounced with ſo much tone and modulation as were uſed by thoſe nations, the harmony of periods was an object carefully ſtudied. Sometimes, too, attention to the perſpicuity, to the force, or to the artful ſuſpenſion of the ſpeaker's meaning, alter this order; and produce ſuch varieties in the arrangement, that it is not eaſy to reduce them to any one principle. But, in general, this was the genius and the character of moſt of the ancient Languages, to give ſuch full liberty to the collocation of words, as allowed them to aſſume whatever order was moſt agreeable to the ſpeaker's imagination. The Hebrew is, indeed, an exception; which, though not altogether without inverſions, yet employs them leſs frequently, and approaches nearer to the Engliſh conſtruction, than either the Greek or the Latin.

All the modern Languages of Europe have adopted a different arrangement from the ancient. In their Proſe compoſitions, very little variety is admitted in the collocation of words; they are moſtly fixed to one order, and that order is, what may be called, the Order of the Underſtanding. They place firſt in the ſentence, the perſon or thing which ſpeaks or acts; next, its action; and laſtly, the object of its action. So that the ideas are made to ſucceed to one another, not according to the degree of importance which the ſeveral objects carry in the imagination, but according to the order of nature and of time.

An Engliſh writer, paying a compliment to a great man, would ſay thus: "It is impoſſible for me to paſs over, in ſi-"lence, ſuch remarkable mildneſs, ſuch ſingular and unheard-"of clemency, and ſuch unuſual moderation, in the exerciſe "of ſupreme power." Here we have, firſt preſented to us, the perſon who ſpeaks. "It is impoſſible for *me*;" next, what that perſon is to do, "impoſſible for him *to paſs over in ſilence*;" and laſtly, the object which moves him ſo to do, "the mildneſs, "clemency, and moderation of his patron." Cicero, from whom I have tranſlated theſe words, juſt reverſes this order; beginning with the object, placing that firſt which was the exciting idea in the ſpeaker's mind, and ending with the ſpeaker and his action. "Tantam manſuetudinem, tam inuſitatam "inauditamque clementiam, tantumque in ſumma poteſtate "rerum omnium modum, tacitus nullo modo præterire poſſum." (Orat. pro Marcell.)

The

The Latin order is more animated; the Engliſh, more clear and diſtinct. The Romans generally arranged their words according to the order in which the ideas roſe in the ſpeaker's imagination. We arrange them according to the order in which the underſtanding directs thoſe ideas to be exhibited, in ſucceſſion, to the view of another. Our arrangement, therefore, appears to be the conſequence of greater refinement in the art of Speech; as far as clearneſs in communication is underſtood to be the end of Speech.

In Poetry, where we are ſuppoſed to riſe above the ordinary ſtyle, and to ſpeak the Language of fancy and paſſion, our arrangement is not altogether ſo limited; but ſome greater liberty is allowed for tranſpoſition, and inverſion. Even there, however, that liberty is confined within narrow bounds, in compariſon of the Ancient Languages. The different Modern Tongues vary from one another in this reſpect. The French Language is, of them all, the moſt determinate in the order of its words, and admits the leaſt of inverſion, either in Proſe or Poetry. The Engliſh admits it more. But the Italian retains the moſt of the ancient tranſpoſitive character; though one is apt to think, at the expenſe of a little obſcurity in the ſtyle of ſome of their authors, who deal moſt in theſe tranſpoſitions.

It is proper, next, to obſerve, that there is one circumſtance in the ſtructure of all the Modern Tongues, which, of neceſſity, limits their arrangement, in a great meaſure, to one fixed and determinate train. We have diſuſed thoſe differences of termination, which, in the Greek and Latin, diſtinguiſhed the ſeveral caſes of nouns, and tenſes of verbs; and which, thereby, pointed out the mutual relation of the ſeveral words in a ſentence to one another, though the related words were diſjoined, and placed in different parts of the ſentence. This is an alteration in the ſtructure of Language, of which I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more in the next Lecture. One obvious effect of it is, that we have now, for the moſt part, no way left us to ſhew the cloſe relation of any two words to one another in meaning, but by placing them cloſe to one another in the period. For inſtance; the Romans could, with propriety, expreſs themſelves thus;

Extinctum nymphæ crudeli funere Daphnim
Flebant.————

Becauſe

Becauſe "Extinctum et Daphnim" being both in the accuſative caſe, this ſhowed, that the adjective and the ſubſtantive were related to each other, though placed at the two extremities of the line; and that both were governed by the active verb "Flebant," to which "nymphæ" plainly appeared to be the nominative. The different terminations here reduced all into order, and made the connexion of the ſeveral words perfectly clear. But let us tranſlate theſe words literally into Engliſh, according to the Latin arrangement; "Dead the nymphs "by a cruel fate Daphnis lamented;" and they become a perfect riddle, in which it is impoſſible to find any meaning.

It was by means of this contrivance, which obtained in almoſt all the Ancient Languages, of varying the termination of nouns and verbs, and thereby pointing out the concordance and the government of the words, in a ſentence, that they enjoyed ſo much liberty of tranſpoſition, and could marſhal and arrange their words in any way that gratified the imagination, or pleaſed the ear. When Language came to be modelled by the northern nations who over-run the empire, they dropped the caſes of nouns, and the different terminations of verbs, with the more eaſe, becauſe they placed no great value upon the advantages ariſing from ſuch a ſtructure of Language. They were attentive only to clearneſs, and copiouſneſs of expreſſion. They neither regarded much the harmony of ſound, nor ſought to gratify the imagination by the collocation of words. They ſtudied ſolely to expreſs themſelves in ſuch a manner as ſhould exhibit their ideas to others in the moſt diſtinct and intelligible order. And hence, if our Language, by reaſon of the ſimple arrangement of its words, poſſeſſes leſs harmony, leſs beauty, and leſs force, than the Greek or Latin; it is, however, in its meaning, more obvious and plain.

Thus I have ſhown what the natural Progreſs of Language has been, in ſeveral material articles: and this account of the Genius and Progreſs of Language, lays a foundation for many obſervations, both curious and uſeful. From what has been ſaid in this, and the preceding Lecture, it appears, that Language was at firſt barren in words, but deſcriptive by the ſound of theſe words; and expreſſive in the manner of uttering them, by the aid of ſignificant tones and geſtures: ſtyle was figura-

tive

tive and poetical: arrangement was fanciful and lively. It appears, that, in all the ſucceſſive changes which Language has undergone, as the world advanced, the underſtanding has gained ground on the fancy and imagination. The Progreſs of Language, in this reſpect, reſembles the progreſs of age in man. The imagination is moſt vigorous and predominant in youth; with advancing years, the imagination cools, and the underſtanding ripens. Thus Language, proceeding from ſterility to copiouſneſs, hath, at the ſame time, proceeded from vivacity to accuracy; from fire and enthuſiaſm, to coolneſs and preciſion. Thoſe characters of early Language, deſcriptive ſound, vehement tones and geſtures, figurative ſtyle, and inverted arrangement, all hang together, have a mutual influence on each other, and have all gradually given place to arbitrary ſounds, calm pronunciation, ſimple ſtyle, plain arrangement. Language is become, in modern times, more correct, indeed, and accurate; but, however, leſs ſtriking and animated; in its ancient ſtate, more favourable to poetry and oratory; in its preſent, to reaſon and philoſophy.

Having finiſhed my account of the Progreſs of Speech, I proceed to give an account of the Progreſs of Writing, which next demands our notice; though it will not require ſo full a diſcuſſion as the former ſubject.

Next to Speech, Writing is, beyond doubt, the moſt uſeful art of which men are poſſeſſed. It is plainly an improvement upon Speech, and therefore muſt have been poſterior to it in order of time. At firſt, men thought of nothing more than communicating their thoughts to one another, when preſent, by means of words, or ſounds, which they uttered. Afterwards, they deviſed this further method, of mutual communication with one another, when abſent, by means of marks or characters preſented to the eye, which we call Writing.

Written characters are of two ſorts. They are either ſigns for things, or ſigns for words. Of the former ſort, ſigns of things, are the pictures, hieroglyphics, and ſymbols, employed by the ancient nations; of the latter ſort, ſigns for words, are the alphabetical characters, now employed by all Europeans. Theſe two kinds of Writing are generically and eſſentially diſtinct.

Pictures

Pictures were, undoubtedly, the firſt eſſay towards Writing. Imitation is ſo natural to man, that, in all ages, and among all nations, ſome methods have obtained, of copying or tracing the likeneſs of ſenſible objects. Thoſe methods would ſoon be employed by men for giving ſome imperfect information to others, at a diſtance, of what had happened; or, for preſerving the memory of facts which they ſought to record. Thus, to ſignify that one man had killed another, they drew the figure of one man ſtretched upon the earth, and of another ſtanding by him with a deadly weapon in his hand. We find, in fact, that when America was firſt diſcovered, this was the only ſort of Writing known in the kingdom of Mexico. By hiſtorical pictures, the Mexicans are ſaid to have tranſmitted the memory of the moſt important tranſactions of their empire. Theſe, however, muſt have been extremely imperfect records; and the nations who had no other, muſt have been very groſs and rude. Pictures could do no more than delineate external events. They could neither exhibit the connexions of them, nor deſcribe ſuch qualities as were not viſible to the eye, nor convey any idea of the diſpoſitions, or words, of men.

To ſupply, in ſome degree, this defect, there aroſe, in proceſs of time, the invention of what are called, Hieroglyphical Characters; which may be conſidered as the ſecond ſtage of the Art of Writing. Hieroglyphics conſiſt in certain ſymbols, which are made to ſtand for inviſible objects, on account of an analogy or reſemblance which ſuch ſymbols were ſuppoſed to bear to the objects. Thus, an eye, was the hieroglyphical ſymbol of knowledge; a circle, of eternity, which has neither beginning, nor end. Hieroglyphics, therefore, were a more refined and extenſive ſpecies of painting. Pictures delineated the reſemblance of external viſible objects. Hieroglyphics painted inviſible objects, by analogies taken from the external world.

Among the Mexicans, were found ſome traces of hieroglyphical characters, intermixed with their hiſtorical pictures. But Egypt was the country where this ſort of Writing was moſt ſtudied, and brought into a regular art. In hieroglyphics, was conveyed all the boaſted wiſdom of their prieſts. According to the properties which they aſcribed to animals, or the qualities

with which they ſuppoſed natural objects to be endowed, they pitched upon them to be the emblems, or hieroglyphics, of moral objects; and employed them in their Writing for that end. Thus, ingratitude was denominated by a viper; imprudence, by a fly; wiſdom, by an ant; victory, by a hawk; a dutiful child, by a ſtork; a man univerſally ſhunned, by an eel, which they ſuppoſed to be found in company with no other fiſh. Sometimes they joined together two or more of theſe hieroglyphical characters; as, a ſerpent with a hawk's head; to denote nature, with God preſiding over it. But, as many of thoſe properties of objects which they aſſumed for the foundation of their hieroglyphics, were merely imaginary, and the alluſions drawn from them were forced and ambiguous; as the conjunction of their characters rendered them ſtill more obſcure, and muſt have expreſſed very indiſtinctly the connexions and relations of things; this ſort of Writing could be no other than ænigmatical, and confuſed in the higheſt degree; and muſt have been a very imperfect vehicle of knowledge of any kind.

It has been imagined, that hieroglyphics were an invention of the Egyptian prieſts, for concealing their learning from common view; and that, upon this account, it was preferred by them to the alphabetical method of Writing. But this is certainly a miſtake. Hieroglyphics were, undoubtedly, employed, at firſt, from neceſſity, not from choice or refinement; and would never have been thought of, if alphabetical characters had been known. The nature of the invention plainly ſhows it to have been one of thoſe groſs and rude eſſays towards Writing, which were adopted in the early ages of the world; in order to extend ſome farther the firſt method which they had employed of ſimple pictures, or repreſentations of viſible objects. Indeed, in after-times, when alphabetical Writing was introduced into Egypt, and the hieroglyphical was, of courſe, fallen into diſuſe, it is known, that the prieſts ſtill employed the hieroglyphical characters, as a ſacred kind of Writing, now become peculiar to themſelves, and ſerving to give an air of myſtery to their learning and religion. In this ſtate, the Greeks found hieroglyphical Writing, when they began to have intercourſe with Egypt; and ſome of their writers miſtook this uſe, to which they found it applied, for the cauſe that had given riſe to the invention.

As

As Writing advanced, from pictures of viſible objects, to hieroglyphics, or ſymbols of things inviſible; from theſe latter, it advanced, among ſome nations, to ſimple arbitrary marks which ſtood for objects, though without any reſemblance or analogy to the objects ſignified. Of this nature was the method of Writing practiſed among the Peruvians. They made uſe of ſmall cords, of different colours; and by knots upon theſe, of various ſizes, and differently ranged, they contrived ſigns for giving information, and communicating their thoughts to one another.

Of this nature alſo, are the written characters, which are uſed to this day, throughout the great empire of China. The Chineſe have no alphabet of letters, or ſimple ſounds, which compoſe their words. But every ſingle character which they uſe in Writing, is ſignificant of an idea; it is a mark which ſtands for ſome one thing, or object. By conſequence, the number of theſe characters muſt be immenſe. It muſt correſpond to the whole number of objects, or ideas, which they have occaſion to expreſs; that is, to the whole number of words which they employ in Speech: nay, it muſt be greater than the number of words; one word, by varying the tone, with which it is ſpoken, may be made to ſignify ſeveral different things. They are ſaid to have ſeventy thouſand of thoſe written characters. To read and write them to perfection, is the ſtudy of a whole life; which ſubjects learning, among them, to infinite diſadvantage; and muſt have greatly retarded the progreſs of all ſcience.

Concerning the origin of theſe Chineſe characters, there have been different opinions, and much controverſy. According to the moſt probable accounts, the Chineſe Writing began, like the Egyptian, with pictures, and hieroglyphical figures. Theſe figures being, in progreſs, abbreviated in their form, for the ſake of writing them eaſily, and greatly enlarged in their number, paſſed, at length, into thoſe marks or characters which they now uſe, and which have ſpread themſelves though ſeveral nations of the Eaſt. For we are informed, that the Japaneſe, the Tonquineſe, and the Coreans, who ſpeak different languages from one another, and from the inhabitants of China, uſe, however, the ſame written characters with them; and, by this

this means, correſpond intelligibly with each other in Writing, though ignorant of the Language ſpoken in their ſeveral countries; a plain proof, that the Chineſe characters are, like hieroglyphics, independent of Language; are ſigns of things, not of words.

We have one inſtance of this ſort of Writing in Europe. Our cyphers, as they are called, or arithmetical figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c. which we have derived from the Arabians, are ſignificant marks, preciſely of the ſame nature with the Chineſe characters. They have no dependence on words; but each figure repreſents an object; repreſents the number for which it ſtands; and, accordingly, on being preſented to the eye, is equally underſtood by all the nations who have agreed in the uſe of theſe cyphers; by Italians, Spaniards, French, and Engliſh, however different the Languages of thoſe nations are from one another, and whatever different names they give, in their reſpective Languages, to each numerical cypher.

As far, then, as we have yet advanced, nothing has appeared which reſembles our letters, or which can be called Writing, in the ſenſe we now give to that term. What we have hitherto ſeen, were all direct ſigns for things, and made no uſe of the medium of ſound, or words; either ſigns by repreſentation, as the Mexican pictures; or ſigns by analogy, as the Egyptian hieroglyphics; or ſigns by inſtitution, as the Peruvian knots, the Chineſe characters, and the Arabian cyphers.

At length, in different nations, men became ſenſible of the imperfection, the ambiguity, and the tedioufneſs of each of theſe methods of communication with one another. They began to conſider, that, by employing ſigns which ſhould ſtand not directly for things, but for the words which they uſed in Speech for naming theſe things, a conſiderable advantage would be gained. For they reflected farther, that though the number of words in every Language be, indeed, very great, yet the number of articulate ſounds, which are uſed in compoſing theſe words, is comparatively ſmall. The ſame ſimple ſounds are continually recurring and repeated; and are combined together, in various ways, for forming all the variety of words which we utter. They bethought themſelves, therefore, of inventing ſigns, not for each word by itſelf, but for each of thoſe ſimple

ſounds

ſounds which we employ in forming our words; and, by joining together a few of thoſe ſigns, they ſaw that it would be practicable to expreſs, in Writing, the whole combinations of ſounds which our words require.

The firſt ſtep, in this new progreſs, was the invention of an alphabet of ſyllables, which probably preceded the invention of an alphabet of letters, among ſome of the ancient nations; and which is ſaid to be retained to this day, in Æthiopia, and ſome countries of India. By fixing upon a particular mark, or character, for every ſyllable in the Language, the number of characters, neceſſary to be uſed in Writing, was reduced within a much ſmaller compaſs than the number of words in the Language. Still, however, the number of characters was great; and muſt have continued to render both reading and Writing very laborious arts. Till, at laſt, ſome happy genius aroſe; and tracing the ſounds made by the human voice, to their moſt ſimple elements, reduced them to a very few vowels and conſonants; and, by affixing to each of theſe, the ſigns which we now call Letters, taught men how, by their combinations, to put into Writing all the different words, or combinations of ſound, which they employed in Speech. By being reduced to this ſimplicity, the art of Writing was brought to its higheſt ſtate of perfection; and, in this ſtate, we now enjoy it in all the countries of Europe.

To whom we are indebted for this ſublime and refined diſcovery, does not appear. Concealed by the darkneſs of remote antiquity, the great inventor is deprived of thoſe honours which would ſtill be paid to his memory, by all the lovers of knowledge and learning. It appears from the books which Moſes has written, that, among the Jews, and probably among the Egyptians, letters had been invented prior to his age. The univerſal tradition among the ancients is, that they were firſt imported into Greece by Cadmus the Phœnician; who, according to the common ſyſtem of chronology, was cotemporary with Joſhua; according to Sir Iſaac Newton's ſyſtem, cotemporary with king David. As the Phœnicians are not known to have been the inventors of any art or ſcience, though, by means of their extenſive commerce, they propagated the diſcoveries made by other nations, the moſt probable and natural

ural account of the origin of alphabetical characters is, that they took rise in Egypt, the first civilized kingdom of which we have any authentic accounts, and the great source of arts and polity among the ancients. In that country, the favourite study of hieroglyphical characters, had directed much attention to the art of Writing. Their hieroglyphics are known to have been intermixed with abbreviated symbols, and arbitrary marks; whence, at last, they caught the idea of contriving marks, not for things merely, but for sounds. Accordingly, Plato (in Phœdro) expressly attributes the invention of letters to Theuth, the Egyptian, who is supposed to have been the Hermes, or Mercury, of the Greeks. Cadmus himself, though he passed from Phœnicia to Greece, yet is affirmed, by several of the ancients, to have been originally of Thebes in Egypt. Most probably, Moses carried with him the Egyptian letters into the land of Canaan; and there being adopted by the Phœnicians, who inhabited part of that country, they were transmitted into Greece.

The alphabet which Cadmus brought into Greece was imperfect, and is said to have contained only sixteen letters. The rest were afterwards added, according as signs for proper sounds were found to be wanting. It is curious to observe, that the letters which we use at this day, can be traced back to this very alphabet of Cadmus. The Roman alphabet, which obtains with us, and with most of the European nations, is plainly formed on the Greek, with a few variations. And all learned men observe, that the Greek characters, especially according to the manner in which they are formed in the oldest inscriptions, have a remarkable conformity with the Hebrew or Samaritan characters, which, it is agreed, are the same with the Phœnician, or the alphabet of Cadmus. Invert the Greek characters from left to right, according to the Phœnician and Hebrew manner of Writing, and they are the same. Besides the conformity of figure, the names or denominations of the letters, alpha, beta, gamma, &c. and the order in which the letters are arranged, in all the several alphabets, Phœnician, Hebrew, Greek, and Roman, agree so much, as amounts to a demonstration, that they were all derived originally from the same source. An invention so useful and simple was greedily received by mankind, and propagated with speed and facility through many different nations.

The

The letters were, originally, written from the right hand towards the left; that is, in a contrary order to what we now practiſe. This manner of Writing obtained among the Aſſyrians, Phœnicians, Arabians, and Hebrews; and from ſome very old inſcriptions, appears to have obtained alſo among the Greeks. Afterwards, the Greeks adopted a new method, writing their lines alternately from the right to the left, and from the left to the right, which was called *Bouſtrophedon*; or, writing after the manner in which oxen plough the ground. Of this, ſeveral ſpecimens ſtill remain; particularly, the inſcription on the famous Sigæan monument; and down to the days of Solon, the legiſlator of Athens, this continued to be the common method of Writing. At length, the motion from the left hand to the right being found more natural and commodious, the practice of Writing, in this direction, prevailed throughout all the countries of Europe.

Writing was long a kind of engraving. Pillars, and tables of ſtone, were firſt employed for this purpoſe, and afterwards plates of the ſofter metals, ſuch as lead. In proportion as Writing became more common, lighter and more portable ſubſtances were employed. The leaves, and the bark of certain trees, were uſed in ſome countries; and in others, tablets of wood, covered with a thin coat of ſoft wax, on which the impreſſion was made with a ſtylus of iron. In later times, the hides of animals, properly prepared and poliſhed into parchment, were the moſt common materials. Our preſent method of writing on paper, is an invention of no greater antiquity than the fourteenth century.

Thus I have given ſome account of the Progreſs of theſe two great arts, Speech and Writing; by which men's thoughts are communicated, and the foundation laid for all knowledge and improvement. Let us conclude the ſubject, with comparing, in a few words, ſpoken Language, and written Language; or words uttered in our hearing, with words repreſented to the eye; where we ſhall find ſeveral advantages and diſadvantages to be balanced on both ſides.

The advantages of Writing above Speech are, that Writing is both more extenſive, and a more permanent method of communication. More extenſive, as it is not confined within the

narrow

narrow circle of thoſe who hear our words, but, by means of written characters, we can ſend our thoughts abroad, and propagate them through the world; we can lift our voice, ſo as to ſpeak to the moſt diſtant regions of the earth. More permanent alſo; as it prolongs this voice to the moſt diſtant ages; it gives us the means of recording our ſentiments to futurity, and of perpetuating the inſtructive memory of paſt tranſactions. It likewiſe affords this advantage to ſuch as read above ſuch as hear, that, having the written characters before their eyes, they can arreſt the ſenſe of the writer. They can pauſe, and reſolve, and compare, at their leiſure, one paſſage with another: whereas, the voice is fugitive and paſſing: you muſt catch the words the moment they are uttered, or you loſe them forever.

But although theſe be ſo great advantages of written Language, that Speech, without Writing, would have been very inadequate for the inſtruction of mankind; yet we muſt not forget to obſerve, that ſpoken Language has a great ſuperiority over written Language, in point of energy or force. The voice of the living ſpeaker, makes an impreſſion on the mind, much ſtronger than can be made by the peruſal of any Writing. The tones of voice, the looks and geſture, which accompany diſcourſe, and which no Writing can convey, render diſcourſe, when it is well managed, infinitely more clear, and more expreſſive, than the moſt accurate Writing. For tones, looks, and geſtures, are natural interpreters of the ſentiments of the mind. They remove ambiguities; they enforce impreſſions; they operate on us by means of ſympathy, which is one of the moſt powerful inſtruments of perſuaſion. Our ſympathy is always awakened more, by hearing the ſpeaker, than by reading his works in our cloſet. Hence, though Writing may anſwer the purpoſes of mere inſtruction, yet all the great and high efforts of eloquence muſt be made, by means of ſpoken, not of written, Language.

LECTURE

LECTURE VIII.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE.

AFTER having given an account of the Riſe and Progreſs of Language, I proceed to treat of its Structure, or of General Grammar. The Structure of Language is extremely artificial; and there are few ſciences, in which a deeper, or more refined logic, is employed, than in Grammar. It is apt to be ſlighted by ſuperficial thinkers as belonging to thoſe rudiments of knowledge, which were inculcated upon us in our earlieſt youth. But what was then inculcated before we could comprehend its principles, would abundantly repay our ſtudy in maturer years; and to the ignorance of it, muſt be attributed many of thoſe fundamental defects which appear in writing.

Few authors have written with philoſophical accuracy on the principles of General Grammar; and, what is more to be regretted, fewer ſtill have thought of applying thoſe principles to the Engliſh Language. While the French Tongue has long been an object of attention to many able and ingenious writers of that nation, who have conſider its conſtruction, and determined its propriety with great accuracy, the Genius and Grammar of the Engliſh, to the reproach of the country, have not been ſtudied with equal care, or aſcertained with the ſame preciſion. Attempts have been made, indeed, of late, towards ſupplying this defect; and ſome able writers have entered on the ſubject; but much remains yet to be done.

I do not propoſe to give any ſyſtem, either of Grammar in general, or of Engliſh Grammar in particular. A minute diſcuſſion of the niceties of Language would carry us too much off from other objects, which demand our attention in this courſe of Lectures. But I propoſe to give a general view of the chief principles relating to this ſubject, in obſervations on the

ſeveral parts of which Speech or Language is compoſed; remarking, as I go along, the peculiarities of our own Tongue. After which, I ſhall make ſome more particular remarks on the Genius of the Engliſh Language.

The firſt thing to be conſidered is, the diviſion of the ſeveral parts of Speech. The eſſential parts of Speech are the ſame in all Languages. There muſt always be ſome words which denote the names of objects, or mark the ſubject of diſcourſe; other words, which denote the qualities of thoſe objects, and expreſs what we affirm concerning them; and other words, which point out their connexions and relations. Hence, ſubſtantives, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, prepoſitions, and conjunctions, muſt neceſſarily be found in all Languages. The moſt ſimple and comprehenſive diviſion of the parts of Speech is, into ſubſtantives, attributives, and connectives.* Subſtantives, are all the words which expreſs the names of objects, or the ſubjects of diſcourſe; attributives, are all the words which expreſs any attribute, property, or action of the former; connectives, are what expreſs the connexions, relations, and dependencies, which take place among them. The common grammatical diviſion of Speech into eight parts; nouns, pronouns, verbs, participles, adverbs, prepoſitions, interjections, and conjunctions, is not very logical, as might be eaſily ſhewn; as it comprehends, under the general term of nouns, both ſubſtantives and adjectives, which are parts of Speech generically and eſſentially diſtinct; while it makes a ſeparate part of Speech of participles, which are no other than verbal adjectives. However, as theſe are the terms to which our ears have been moſt familiarized, and, as an exact logical diviſion is of no great conſequence to our preſent purpoſe, it will be better to make uſe of theſe known terms than of any other.

We

* Quintilian informs us, that this was the moſt ancient diviſion. "Tum "videbit quot & quæ ſunt partes orationis. Quanquam de numero parum "convenit. Veteres enim, quorum fuerant Ariſtoteles atque Theodectes, ver-"ba modo, & nomina, & convictiones tradiderunt. Videlicet, quod in verbis "vim ſermonis, in nominibus materiam, (quia alterum eſt quod loquimus, al-"terum de quo loquimur) in convinctionibus autem complexum eorum eſſe "judicarunt; quas conjunctiones a pleriſque dici ſcio; ſed hæc videtur ex "συνδεσμω magis propria tranſlatio. Paulatim a philoſophicis acmaximè a "ſtoicis, auctus eſt numerus, ac primùm convinctionibus articuli adjecti; poſt "præpoſitiones; nominibus, appellatio, deinde pronomen; deinde miſtum ver-"bo participium; ipſis verbis, adverbia." Lib. I. cap. iv.

We are naturally led to begin with the conſideration of ſubſtantive nouns, which are the foundation of all Grammar, and may be conſidered as the moſt ancient part of Speech. For, aſſuredly, as ſoon as men had got beyond ſimple interjections, or exclamations of paſſion, and began to communicate themſelves by diſcourſe, they would be under a neceſſity of aſſigning names to the objects they ſaw around them, which, in Grammatical Language, is called, the Invention of ſubſtantive nouns.* And here, at our firſt ſetting out, ſomewhat curious occurs. The individual objects which ſurround us, are infinite in number. A ſavage, wherever he looked, beheld foreſts and trees. To give ſeparate names to every one of thoſe trees, would have been an endleſs and impracticable undertaking. His firſt object was, to give a name to that particular tree, whoſe fruit relieved his hunger, or whoſe ſhade protected him from the ſun. But obſerving, that though other trees were diſtinguiſhed from this by peculiar qualities of ſize or appearance, yet, that they alſo agreed and reſembled one another, in certain common qualities, ſuch as ſpringing from a root, and bearing branches and leaves, he formed, in his mind, ſome general idea of thoſe common qualities, and ranging all that poſ-

ſeſſed

* I do not mean to aſſert, that among all nations, the firſt invented words were ſimple and regular ſubſtantive nouns. Nothing is more difficult and uncertain, than to aſcertain the preciſe ſteps by which men proceeded in the formation of Language. Names for objects muſt, doubtleſs, have ariſen in the moſt early ſtage of Speech. But, it is probable, as the learned author of the Treatiſe, *On the Origin and Progreſs of Language*, has ſhown (vol. i. p. 371. 395.) that, among ſeveral ſavage tribes, ſome of the firſt articulate ſounds that were formed, denoted a whole ſentence rather than the name of a particular object; conveying ſome information, or expreſſing ſome deſires or fears ſuited to the circumſtances in which that tribe was placed, or relating to the buſineſs they had moſt frequent occaſion to carry on; as, the lion is coming, the river is ſwelling, &c. Many of their firſt words, it is likewiſe probable, were not ſimple ſubſtantive nouns, but ſubſtantives, accompanied with ſome of thoſe attributes, in conjunction with which they were moſt frequently accuſtomed to behold them; as, the great bear, the little hut, the wound made by the hatchet, &c. Of all which, the Author produces inſtances from ſeveral of the American Languages; and it is, undoubtedly, ſuitable to the natural courſe of the operations of the human mind, thus to begin with particulars the moſt obvious to ſenſe, and to proceed, from theſe, to more general expreſſions. He likewiſe obſerves, that the words of thoſe primitive tongues are far from being, as we might ſuppoſe them, rude and ſhort, and crowded with conſonants: but, on the contrary, are, for the moſt part, long words, and full of vowels. This is the conſequence of their being formed upon the natural ſounds which the voice utters with moſt eaſe, a little varied and diſtinguiſhed by articulation; and he ſhows this to hold, in fact, among moſt of the barbarous Languages which are known.

ſeſſed them under one claſs of objects, he called that whole claſs, *a tree*. Longer experience taught him to ſubdivide this genus into the ſeveral ſpecies of oak, pine, aſh, and the reſt, according as his obſervation extended to the ſeveral qualities in which theſe trees agreed or differed.

But, ſtill he made uſe only of general terms in Speech. For the oak, the pine and the aſh, were names of whole claſſes of objects; each of which included an immenſe number of undiſtinguiſhed individuals. Here then it appears, that though the formation of abſtract, or general conceptions, is ſuppoſed to be a difficult operation of the mind; ſuch conceptions muſt have entered into the very firſt formation of Language. For, if we except only the proper names of perſons, ſuch as Cæſar, John, Peter, all the other ſubſtantive nouns which we employ in diſcourſe, are the names, not of individual objects, but of very extenſive genera, or ſpecies of objects; as, man, lion, houſe, river, &c. We are not, however to imagine, that this invention of general, or abſtract terms, requires any great exertion of metaphyſical capacity: for, by whatever ſteps the mind proceeds in it, it is certain, that, when men have once obſerved reſemblances among objects, they are naturally inclined to call all thoſe which reſemble one another, by one common name; and, of courſe, to claſs them under one ſpecies. We may daily obſerve this practiſed by children in their firſt attempts towards acquiring Language.

But now, after Language had proceeded as far as I have deſcribed, the notification which it made of objects was ſtill very imperfect: for, when one mentioned to another in diſcourſe, any ſubſtantive noun; ſuch as, man, lion, or tree, how was it to be known which man, which lion, or which tree he meant, among the many comprehended under one name? Here occurs a very curious, and a very uſeful contrivance for ſpecifying the individual object intended, by means of that part of Speech, called the article.

The force of the article conſiſts in pointing or ſingling out from the common maſs, the individual of which we mean to ſpeak. In Engliſh, we have two articles, *a* and *the*; *a* is more general and unlimited; *the* more definite and ſpecial. *A* is much the ſame with *one*, and marks only any one indi-

vidual

vidual of a ſpecies; that individual being either unknown, or left undetermined; as, a lion, a king. *The*, which poſſeſſes more properly the force of the article, aſcertains ſome known or determined individual of the ſpecies; as, the lion, the king.

Articles are words of great uſe in Speech. In ſome Languages, however, they are not found. The Greeks have but one article, ὁ ἡ τὸ, which anſwers to our definite, or proper article, *the*. They have no word which anſwers to our article *a*; but they ſupply its place by the abſence of their article: Thus, Βασιλευς ſignifies, *a* king; ὁ Βασιλευς, *the* king. The Latins have no article. In the room of it, they employ pronouns; as, hic, ille, iſte, for pointing out the objects which they want to diſtinguiſh. "Noſter ſermo," ſays Quintillian, "articulos non deſiderat, ideoque in alias partes orationis "ſparguntur." This, however, appears to me a defect in the Latin Tongue; as articles contribute much to the clearneſs and preciſion of Language.

In order to illuſtrate this, remark, what difference there is in the meaning of the following expreſſions in Engliſh, depending wholly on the different employment of the articles: "The ſon of "a king. The ſon of the king. A ſon of the king's." Each of theſe three phraſes has an entirely different meaning, which I need not explain, becauſe any one who underſtands the Language, conceives it clearly at firſt hearing, through the different application of the article *a* and *the*. Whereas, in Latin, "Filius "regis," is wholly undetermined; and to explain, in which of theſe three ſenſes it is to be underſtood, for it may bear any of them, a circumlocution of ſeveral words muſt be uſed. In the ſame manner, "Are you *a* king?" "Are you *the* king?" are queſtions of quite different import; which, however, are confounded together in the Latin phraſe, "eſne tu rex?" "Thou art *a* "man," is a very general and harmleſs poſition; but, "Thou art "*the* man," is an aſſertion capable, we know, of ſtriking terror and remorſe into the heart. Theſe obſervations illuſtrate the force and importance of articles: And, at the ſame time, I gladly lay hold of any opportunity of ſhewing the advantages of our own Language.

Beſides

Beſides this quality of being particulariſed by the article, three affections belong to ſubſtantive nouns, number, gender, and caſe, which require our conſideration.

Number diſtinguiſhes them as one, or many, of the ſame kind, called the Singular and Plural; a diſtinction found in all Languages, and which muſt, indeed, have been coeval with the very infancy of Language; as there were few things which men had more frequent occaſion to expreſs, than the difference between one and many. For the greater facility of expreſſing it, it has, in all Languages, been marked by ſome variation made upon the ſubſtantive noun; as we ſee, in Engliſh, our plural is commonly formed by the addition of the letter S. In the Hebrew, Greek, and ſome other ancient Languages, we find not only a plural, but a dual number; the riſe of which may very naturally be accounted for, from ſeparate terms of numbering not being yet invented, and one, two, and many, being all, or at leaſt, the chief numeral diſtinctions which men, at firſt, had any occaſion to take notice of.

Gender, is an affection of ſubſtantive nouns, which will lead us into more diſcuſſion than number. Gender, being founded on the diſtinction of the two ſexes, it is plain, that in a proper ſenſe, it can only find place in the names of living creatures, which admit the diſtinction of male and female; and, therefore, can be ranged under the maſculine or feminine genders. All other ſubſtantive nouns ought to belong to what grammarians call, the neuter gender, which is meant to imply the negation of either ſex. But, with reſpect to this diſtribution, ſomewhat ſingular hath obtained in the Structure of Language. For, in correſpondence to that diſtinction of male and female ſex, which runs through all the claſſes of animals, men have, in moſt Languages, ranked a great number of inanimate objects alſo, under the like diſtinctions of maſculine and feminine. Thus we find it, both in the Greek and Latin Tongues. *Gladius*, a ſword, for inſtance, is maſculine; *ſagitta*, an arrow, is feminine; and this aſſignation of ſex to inanimate objects, this diſtinction of them into maſculine and feminine, appears often to be entirely capricious; derived from no other principle than the caſual Structure of the Language, which refers to a certain gender, words of a certain termination. In the Greek and Latin, however, all

inanimate

inanimate objects are not distributed into masculine and feminine; but many of them are also classed, where all of them ought to have been, under the neuter gender; as, *templum*, a church; *sedile*, a seat.

But the Genius of the French and Italian Tongues differs, in this respect, from the Greek and Latin. In the French and Italian, from whatever cause it has happened, so it is, that the neuter gender is wholly unknown, and that all their names of inanimate objects are put upon the same footing with living creatures; and distributed, without exception, into masculine and feminine. The French have two articles, the masculine *le*, and the feminine *la*; and one or other of these is prefixed to all substantive nouns in the Language, to denote their gender. The Italians make the same universal use of their articles *il* and *lo*, for the masculine; and *la*, for the feminine.

In the English Language, it is remarkable that there obtains a peculiarity quite opposite. In the French and Italian, there is no neuter gender. In the English, when we use common discourse, all substantive nouns, that are not names of living creatures, are neuter, without exception. *He*, *she*, and *it*, are the marks of the three genders; and we always use *it*, in speaking of any object where there is no sex, or where the sex is not known. The English is, perhaps, the only Language in the known world (except the Chinese, which is said to agree with it in this particular) where the distinction of gender is properly and philosophically applied in the use of words, and confined, as it ought to be, to mark the real distinctions of male and female.

Hence arises a very great and signal advantage of the English Tongue, which it is of consequence to remark.* Though in common discourse, as I have already observed, we employ only the proper and literal distinction of sexes; yet the genius of the Language permits us, whenever it will add beauty to our discourse, to make the names of inanimate objects masculine or feminine in a metaphorical sense; and when we do so, we are understood to quit the literal style, and to use one of the figures of discourse.

For

* The following observations on the metaphorical use of genders, in the English Language, are taken from Mr. Harris's Hermes.

For inſtance; if I am ſpeaking of virtue, in the courſe of ordinary converſation, or of ſtrict reaſoning, I refer the word to no ſex or gender; I ſay, "Virtue is its own reward;" or, "it is the law of our nature." But if I chooſe to riſe into a higher tone; if I ſeek to embelliſh and animate my diſcourſe, I give a ſex to virtue; I ſay, "She deſcends from Heaven;" "ſhe alone confers true honour upon man;" "her gifts are "the only durable rewards." By this means, we have it in our power to vary our ſtyle at pleaſure. By making a very ſlight alteration, we can perſonify any object that we chooſe to introduce with dignity; and by this change of manner, we give warning, that we are paſſing from the ſtrict and logical, to the ornamented and rhetorical ſtyle.

This is an advantage which, not only every poet, but every good writer and ſpeaker in proſe, is, on many occaſions, glad to lay hold of, and improve; and it is an advantage peculiar to our Tongue; no other Language poſſeſſes it. For, in other Languages, every word has one fixed gender, maſculine, feminine, or neuter, which can, upon any occaſion, be changed; *αρετη*, for inſtance, in Greek, *virtus* in Latin, and *la vertu* in French, are uniformly feminine. *She*, muſt always be the pronoun anſwering to the word, whether you be writing in poetry or proſe, whether you be uſing the ſtyle of reaſoning, or that of declamation: whereas, in Engliſh, we can either expreſs ourſelves with the philoſophical accuracy of giving no gender to things inanimate; or by giving them gender, and transforming them into perſons, we adapt them to the ſtyle of poetry, and, when it is proper, we enliven proſe.

It deſerves to be further remarked on this ſubject, that, when we employ that liberty which our Language allows, of aſcribing ſex to any inanimate object, we have not, however, the liberty of making it what gender we pleaſe, maſculine or feminine; but are, in general, ſubjected to ſome rule of gender which the currency of Language has fixed to that object. The foundation of that rule is imagined, by Mr. Harris, in his "Philoſophical Inquiry into the Principles of Grammar," to be laid in a certain diſtant reſemblance, or analogy, to the natural diſtinction of the two ſexes.

Thus,

Thus, according to him, we commonly give the maſculine gender to thoſe ſubſtantive nouns uſed figuratively, which are conſpicuous for the attributes of imparting, or communicating; which are by nature ſtrong and efficacious, either to good or evil; or which have a claim to ſome eminence, whether laudable or not. Thoſe again, he imagines, to be generally made feminine, which are conſpicuous for the attributes of containing, and of bringing forth; which have more of the paſſive in their nature, than the active; which are peculiarly beautiful, or amiable; or which have reſpect to ſuch exceſſes as are rather feminine than maſculine. Upon theſe principles he takes notice, that the ſun is always put in the maſculine gender with us, the moon in the feminine, as being the receptacle of the ſun's light. The earth is, univerſally, feminine. A ſhip, a country, a city, are likewiſe made feminine, as receivers, or containers. God, in all Languages, is maſculine. Time, we make maſculine, on account of its mighty efficacy; virtue, feminine, from its beauty, and its being the object of love. Fortune is always feminine. Mr. Harris imagines, that the reaſons which determine the gender of ſuch capital words as theſe, hold in moſt other Languages, as well as the Engliſh. This, however, appears doubtful. A variety of circumſtances, which ſeem caſual to us, becauſe we cannot reduce them to principles, muſt, unqueſtionably, have influenced the original formation of Languages; and in no article whatever does Language appear to have been more capricious, and to have proceeded leſs according to fixed rule, than in the impoſition of gender upon things inanimate; eſpecially among ſuch nations as have applied the diſtinction of maſculine and feminine to all ſubſtantive nouns.

Having diſcuſſed gender, I proceed, next, to another remarkable peculiarity of ſubſtantive nouns, which in the ſtyle of Grammar, is called their declenſion by caſes. Let us, firſt, conſider what caſes ſignify. In order to underſtand this, it is neceſſary to obſerve, that, after men had given names to external objects, had particularized them by means of the article, and diſtinguiſhed them by number and gender, ſtill their Language remained extremely imperfect, till they had deviſed ſome method of expreſſing the relations which thoſe objects bore, one towards

another. They would find it of little use to have a name for man, lion, tree, river, without being able, at the same time, to signify how these stood with respect to each other; whether, as approaching to, receding from, joined with, and the like. Indeed, the relations which objects bear to one another, are immensely numerous; and therefore, to devise names for them all, must have been among the last and most difficult refinements of Language. But, in its most early periods, it was absolutely necessary to express, in some way or other, such relations as were most important, and as occurred most frequently in common Speech. Hence the genitive, dative, and ablative cases of nouns, which express the noun itself, together with those relations *of*, *to*, *from*, *with*, and *by*; the relations which, of all others, we have the most frequent occasion to mention. The proper idea then of cases in declension, is no other than an expression of the state, or relation, which one object bears to another, denoted by some variation made upon the name of that object; most commonly in the final letters, and by some Languages, in the initial.

All Languages, however, do not agree in this mode of expression. The Greek, Latin, and several other Languages, use declension. The English, French, and Italian, do not; or, at most, use it very imperfectly. In place of the variations of cases, these modern Tongues express the relations of objects, by means of the words called prepositions, which are the names of those relations, prefixed to the name of the object. English nouns have no case whatever, except a sort of genitive, commonly formed by the addition of the letter *s* to the noun; as when we say "Dryden's Poems," meaning the Poems of Dryden. Our personal pronouns have also a case, which answers to the accusative of the Latin, *I, me; he, him; who, whom.* There is nothing, then, or at least very little, in the Grammar of our Language, which corresponds to declension in the Ancient Languages.

Two questions, respecting this subject, may be put. First, Which of these methods of expressing relations, whether that by declension, or that by prepositions, was the most ancient usage in Language? And next, Which of them has the best effect? Both methods, it is plain, are the same as to the sense, and differ only in form. For the significancy of the Roman

Language

Language would not have been altered, though the nouns, like ours, had been without cases, provided they had employed prepositions; and though, to express a disciple of Plato, they had said, "Discipulus de Plato," like the modern Italians, in place of "Discipulus Platonis."

Now, with respect to the antiquity of cases, although they may, on first view, seem to constitute a more artificial method than the other, of denoting relations, yet there are strong reasons for thinking that this was the earliest method practised by men. We find, in fact, that declensions and cases are used in most of what are called the Mother Tongues, or Original Languages, as well as in the Greek and Latin. And a very natural and satisfying account can be given why this usage should have early obtained. Relations are the most abstract and metaphysical ideas of any which men have occasion to form, when they are considered by themselves, and separated from the related object. It would puzzle any man, as has well been observed by an author on this subject, to give a distinct account of what is meant by such a word as *of* or *from*, when it stands by itself, and to explain all that may be included under it. The first rude inventors of Language, therefore, would not, for a long while, arrive at such general terms. In place of considering any relation in the abstract, and devising a name for it, they would much more easily conceive it in conjunction with a particular object; and they would express their conceptions of it, by varying the name of that object through all the different cases; *hominis*, of a man; *homini*, to a man; *homine*, with a man, &c.

But though this method of declension was, probably, the only method which men employed, at first, for denoting relations, yet, in progress of time, many other relations being observed, besides those which are signified by the cases of nouns, and men also becoming more capable of general and metaphysical ideas, separate names were gradually invented for all the relations which occurred, forming that part of Speech which we now call prepositions. Prepositions, being once introduced, they were found to be capable of supplying the place of cases, by being prefixed to the nominative of the noun. Hence, it came to pass, that as nations were intermixed by migrations and conquests,

conqueſts, and were obliged to learn and adopt the Languages of one another, prepoſitions ſupplanted the uſe of caſes and declenſions. When the Italian Tongue, for inſtance, ſprung out of the Roman, it was found more eaſy and ſimple, by the Gothic nations, to accommodate a few prepoſitions to the nominative of every noun, and to ſay, *di Roma, al Roma, di Carthago, al Carthago*, than to remember all the variety of terminations, *Romæ, Romam, Carthiginis, Carthaginem*, which the uſe of declenſions required in the ancient nouns. By this progreſs we can give a natural account how nouns, in our modern Tongues, come to be ſo void of declenſion: a progreſs which is fully illuſtrated in Dr. Adam Smith's ingenious Diſſertation on the Formation of Languages.

With regard to the other queſtion on this ſubject, Which of theſe two methods is of the greateſt utility and beauty? we ſhall find advantages and diſadvantages to be balanced on both ſides. There is no doubt that, by aboliſhing caſes, we have rendered the Structure of Modern Languages more ſimple. We have diſembarraſſed it of all the intricacy which aroſe from the different forms of declenſion, of which the Romans had no fewer than five; and from all the irregularities in theſe ſeveral declenſions. We have thereby rendered our Languages more eaſy to be acquired, and leſs ſubject to the perplexity of rules. But, though the ſimplicity and eaſe of Language be great and eſtimable advantages, yet there are alſo ſuch diſadvantages attending the modern method, as leave the balance, on the whole, doubtful, or rather incline it to the ſide of antiquity.

For, in the firſt place, by our conſtant uſe of prepoſitions for expreſſing the relations of things, we have filled Language with a multitude of thoſe little words, which are eternally occurring in every ſentence, and may be thought thereby to have encumbered Speech, by an addition of terms; and by rendering it more prolix, to have enervated its force. In the ſecond place, we have certainly rendered the ſound of Language leſs agreeable to the ear, by depriving it of that variety and ſweetneſs, which aroſe from the length of words, and the change of terminations, occaſioned by the caſes in the Greek and Latin. But, in the third place, the moſt material diſadvantage is, that, by this abolition of caſes, and by a ſimilar alteration, of which

I am

I am to ſpeak in the next Lecture, in the conjugation of verbs, we have deprived ourſelves of that liberty of tranſpoſition in the arrangement of words, which the Ancient Languages enjoyed.

In the Ancient Tongues, as I formerly obſerved, the different terminations, produced by declenſion and conjugation, pointed out the reference of the ſeveral words of a ſentence to one another, without the aid of juxtapoſition; ſuffered them to be placed, without ambiguity, in whatever order was moſt ſuited to give emphaſis to the meaning, or harmony to the ſound. But now, having none of thoſe marks of relation incorporated with the words themſelves, we have no other way left us, of ſhowing what words in a ſentence are moſt cloſely connected in meaning, than that of placing them cloſe by one another in the period. The meaning of the ſentence is brought out in ſeparate members and portions; it is broken down and divided. Whereas the ſtructure of the Greek and Roman ſentences, by the government of their nouns and verbs, preſented the meaning ſo interwoven and compounded in all its parts, as to make us perceive it in one united view. The cloſing words of the period aſcertained the relation of each member to another; and all that ought to be connected in our idea, appeared connected in the expreſſion. Hence, more brevity, more vivacity, more force. That luggage of particles, (as an ingenious Author happily expreſſes it) which we are obliged always to carry along with us, both clogs ſtyle, and enfeebles ſentiment.*

Pronouns

* "The various terminations of the ſame word, whether verb or noun, are always conceived to be more intimately connected with the term which they ſerve to lengthen, than the additional, detached, and in themſelves inſignificant particles, which we are obliged to employ as connectives to our ſignificant words. Our method gives almoſt the ſame expoſure, to the one as to the other, making the ſignificant parts, and the inſignificant, equally conſpicuous; theirs, much oftener ſinks, as it were, the former into the latter, at once preſerving their uſe and hiding their weakneſs. Our Modern Languages may, in this reſpect, be compared to the art of the carpenter, in its rudeſt ſtate; when the union of the materials, employed by the artiſan, could be effected only by the help of thoſe external and coarſe implements, pins, nails, and cramps. The Ancient Languages reſemble the ſame art in its moſt improved ſtate, after the invention of dovetail joints, grooves, and mortices; when thus all the principal junctions are effected, by forming properly, the extremities or terminations of the pieces to be joined. For by means of theſe, the union of the parts is rendered cloſer; while that by which that union is produced, is ſcarcely perceivable." The Philoſophy of Rhetoric, by Dr. Campbell, vol. ii. p. 412.

Pronouns are the clafs of words moft nearly related to fubftantive nouns; being, as the name imports, repreſentatives, or ſubſtitutes, of nouns. *I, thou, he, ſhe,* and *it,* are no other than an abridged way of naming the perſons, or objects, with which we have immediate intercourſe, or to which we are obliged frequently to refer in diſcourſe. Accordingly, they are ſubject to the ſame modifications with ſubſtantive nouns, of number, gender, and caſe. Only, with reſpect to gender, we may obſerve, that the pronouns of the firſt and ſecond perſon, as they are called, *I* and *thou,* do not appear to have had the diſtinctions of gender given them in any Language; for this plain reaſon, that, as they always refer to perſons who are preſent to each other, when they ſpeak, their ſex muſt appear, and therefore needs not be marked by a maſculine or feminine pronoun. But, as the third perſon may be abſent, or unknown, the diſtinction of gender there becomes neceſſary; and accordingly, in Engliſh, it hath all the three genders belonging to it; *he, ſhe, it.* As to caſes, even thoſe Languages which have dropped them in ſubſtantive nouns, ſometimes retain more of them in pronouns, for the ſake of the greater readineſs in expreſſing relations; as pronouns are words of ſuch frequent occurrence in diſcourſe. In Engliſh, moſt of our grammarians hold the perſonal pronouns to have two caſes, beſides the nominative; a genitive, and accuſative; *I, mine, me; thou, thine, thee; he, his, him; who, whoſe, whom.*

In the firſt ſtage of Speech, it is probable that the places of thoſe pronouns were ſupplied, by pointing to the object when preſent, and naming it when abſent. For one can hardly think that pronouns were of early invention; as they are words of ſuch a particular and artificial nature. *I, thou, he, it,* it is to be obſerved, are not names peculiar to any ſingle object, but ſo very general, that they may be applied to all perſons, or objects, whatever, in certain circumſtances. *It,* is the moſt general term that can poſſibly be conceived, as it may ſtand for any one thing in the univerſe, of which we ſpeak. At the ſame time, theſe pronouns have this quality, that, in the circumſtances in which they are applied, they never denote more than one preciſe individual; which they aſcertain and ſpecify, much in the ſame manner, as is done by the article. So that

pronouns

pronouns are, at once, the moſt general, and the moſt particular words in Language. They are commonly the moſt irregular and troubleſome words to the learner, in the Grammar of all Tongues; as being the words moſt in common uſe, and ſubjected thereby to the greateſt varieties.

Adjectives, or terms of quality, ſuch as, *great*, *little*, *black*, *white*, *yours*, *ours*, are the plaineſt and ſimpleſt of all that claſs of words which are termed attributive. They are found in all Languages; and, in all Languages, muſt have been very early invented; as objects could not be diſtinguiſhed from each other, nor any intercourſe be carried on concerning them, till once names were given to their different qualities.

I have nothing to obſerve in relation to them, except that ſingularity which attends them in the Greek and Latin, of having the ſame form given them with ſubſtantive nouns; being declined, like them, by caſes, and ſubjected to the like diſtinctions of number and gender. Hence it has happened, that grammarians have made them to belong to the ſame part of ſpeech, and divided the noun into ſubſtantive and adjective; an arrangement, founded more on attention to the external form of words, than to their nature and force. For adjectives or terms of quality, have not, by their nature, the leaſt reſemblance to ſubſtantive nouns, as they never expreſs any thing which can poſſibly ſubſiſt by itſelf; which is the very eſſence of the ſubſtantive noun. They are, indeed, more akin to verbs, which, like them, expreſs the attribute of ſome ſubſtance.

It may, at firſt view, appear ſomewhat odd and fantaſtic, that adjectives ſhould in theſe Ancient Languages, have aſſumed ſo much the form of ſubſtantives; ſince neither number, nor gender, nor caſes, nor relations, have any thing to do, in a proper ſenſe, with mere qualities, ſuch as, *good* or *great*, *ſoft* or *hard*. And yet *bonus*, and *magnus*, and *tener*, have their ſingular and plural, their maſculine and feminine, their genitives and datives, like any of the names of ſubſtances, or perſons. But this can be accounted for, from the genius of thoſe Tongues. They avoided, as much as poſſible, conſidering qualities ſeparately, or in the abſtract. They made them a part or appendage, of the ſubſtance which they ſerved to diſtinguiſh; they made the adjective depend on its ſubſtantive, and

reſemble

reſemble it in termination, in number, and gender, in order that the two might coaleſce the more intimately, and be joined in the form of expreſſion, as they were in the nature of things. The liberty of tranſpoſition, too, which thoſe Languages indulged, required ſuch a method as this to be followed. For, allowing the related words of a ſentence to be placed at a diſtance from each other, it required the relation of adjectives to their proper ſubſtantives to be pointed out, by ſuch ſimilar circumſtances of form and termination, as, according to the grammatical ſtyle, ſhould ſhow their concordance. When I ſay in Engliſh, the "Beautiful wife of a brave man," the juxtapoſition of the words prevents all ambiguity. But when I ſay in Latin, "Formoſa fortis viri uxor;" it is only the agreement, in gender, number, and caſe, of the adjective "*formoſa*," which is the firſt word of the ſentence, with the ſubſtantive "*uxor*," which is the laſt word that declares the meaning.

LECTURE

LECTURE IX.

STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE. ENGLISH TONGUE.

OF the whole clafs of words that are called attributive, indeed, of all the parts of Speech, the moft complex, by far, is the verb. It is chiefly in this part of Speech, that the fubtile and profound metaphyfic of Language appears; and, therefore, examining the nature and different variations of the verb, there might be room for ample difcuffion. But as I am fenfible that fuch grammatical difcuffions, when they are purfued far, become intricate and obfcure, I fhall avoid dwelling any longer on this fubject than feems abfolutely neceffary.

The verb is fo far of the fame nature with the adjective, that it expreffes, like it, an attribute, or propriety, of fome perfon or thing. But it does more than this. For, in all verbs, in every Language, there are no lefs than three things implied at once; the attribute of fome fubftantive, an affirmation concerning that attribute, and time. Thus, when I fay, "the fun "fhineth;" fhining, is the attribute afcribed to the fun; the prefent time is marked; and an affirmation is included, that this property of fhining belongs, at that time, to the fun. The participle, "fhining," is merely an adjective, which denotes an attribute, or property, and alfo expreffes time; but carries no affirmation. The infinitive mood, "to fhine," may be called the name of the verb; it carries neither time nor affirmation; but fimply expreffes that attribute, action, or ftate of things, which is to be the fubject of the other moods and tenfes. Hence the infinitive is often akin to a fubftantive noun; and, both in Engliſh and Latin, is fometimes conſtructed as fuch. As, "Scire tuum nihil eſt." "Dulce et decorum eſt pro patria "mori." And, in Engliſh, in the fame manner. "To write

"well is difficult; to ſpeak eloquently is ſtill more difficult." But as, through all the other tenſes and moods, the affirmation runs, and is eſſential to them; "the ſun ſhineth, was ſhining, "ſhone, will ſhine, would have ſhone," &c. the affirmation ſeems to be that which chiefly diſtinguiſhes the verb from the other parts of Speech, and gives it its moſt conſpicuous power. Hence there can be no ſentence or complete propoſition, without a verb either expreſſed or implied. For, whenever we ſpeak, we always mean to aſſert, that ſomething is, or is not; and the word which carries this aſſertion, or affirmation, is a verb. From this ſort of eminence belonging to it, this part of Speech hath received its name; verb, from the Latin, *verbum*, or *the word*, by way of diſtinction.

Verbs, therefore, from their importance and neceſſity in Speech, muſt have been coeval with men's firſt attempts towards the formation of Language: though, indeed, it muſt have been the work of long time, to rear them up to that accurate and complex ſtructure, which they now poſſeſs. It ſeems very probable, as Dr. Smith has ſuggeſted, that the radical verb, or the firſt form of it, in moſt Languages, would be what we now call, the Impersonal Verb. "It rains; it thunders; it is "light; it is agreeable;" and the like, as this is the very ſimpleſt form of the verb, and merely affirms the exiſtence of an event, or of a ſtate of things. By degrees, after pronouns were invented, ſuch verbs became perſonal, and were branched out into all the variety of tenſes and moods.

The tenſes of the verb are contrived to imply the ſeveral diſtinctions of time. Of theſe, I muſt take ſome notice, in order to ſhow the admirable accuracy with which Language is conſtructed. We think, commonly, of no more than the three great diviſions of time, into the paſt, the preſent, and the future: and we might imagine, that if verbs had been ſo contrived, as ſimply to expreſs theſe, no more was needful. But Language proceeds with much greater ſubtilty. It ſplits time into its ſeveral moments. It conſiders time as never ſtanding ſtill, but always flowing; things paſt, as more or leſs perfectly completed; and things future, as more or leſs remote, by different gradations. Hence the great variety of tenſes in moſt Tongues.

The

The preſent may, indeed, be always conſidered as one indiviſible point, ſuſceptible of no variety. "I write, or, I am "writing; *ſcribo.*" But it is not ſo with the paſt. There is no language ſo poor, but it hath two or three tenſes to expreſs the varieties of it. Ours hath no fewer than four. 1. A paſt action may be conſidered as left unfiniſhed; which makes the imperfect tenſe, "I was writing; *ſcribebam.*" 2. As juſt now finiſhed. This makes the proper perfect tenſe, which, in Engliſh, is always expreſſed by the help of the auxiliary verb, "I "have written." 3. It may be conſidered as finiſhed ſome time ago; the particular time left indefinite. "I wrote, *ſcripſi*;" which may either ſignify, "I wrote yeſterday, or I wrote a "twelvemonth ago." This is what grammarians call an aöriſt, or indefinite paſt. 4. It may be conſidered as finiſhed before ſomething elſe, which is alſo paſt. This is the pluſquamperfect. "I had written; *ſcripſeram.* I had written before I re"ceived his letter."

Here we obſerve with ſome pleaſure, that we have an advantage over the Latins, who have only three varieties upon the paſt time. They have no proper perfect tenſe, or one which diſtinguiſhes an action juſt now finiſhed, from an action that was finiſhed ſome time ago. In both theſe caſes, they muſt ſay, "*ſcripſi.*" Though there be a manifeſt difference in the tenſes, which our Language expreſſes, by this variation, "I have written," meaning, I have juſt now finiſhed writing; and, "I wrote," meaning at ſome former time, ſince which, other things have intervened. This difference the Romans have no tenſe to expreſs; and, therefore, can only do it by a circumlocution.

The chief varieties in the future time are two; a ſimple or indefinite future: "I ſhall write; *ſcribam:*" and a future, rerelating to ſomething elſe, which is alſo future. "I ſhall have "written; *ſcripſero.*" I ſhall have written before he arrives.*

Beſides tenſes, or the power of expreſſing time, verbs admit the diſtinction of Voices, as they are called, the active and the paſſive; according as the affirmation reſpects ſomething that is done, or ſomething that is ſuffered; "I love, or I am loved."

They

* the tenſes of verbs, Mr. Harris's Hermes may be conſulted, by ſuch as to ſee them ſcrutinized with metaphyſical accuracy; and alſo, the eſſay on the Origin and Progreſs of Language, vol. ii. p. 125.

They admit alſo the diſtinction of moods, which are deſigned to expreſs the affirmation, whether active or paſſive, under different forms. The indicative mood, for inſtance, ſimply declares a propoſition, "I write; I have written;" the imperative requires, commands, threatens, "write thou; let him write." The ſubjunctive expreſſes the propoſition under the form of a condition, or in ſubordination to ſome other thing, to which a reference is made, "I might write, I could write, I ſhould write, "if the caſe were ſo and ſo." This manner of expreſſing an affirmation, under ſo many different forms, together alſo with the diſtinction of the three perſons, *I, thou* and *he*, conſtitutes what is called, the conjugation of verbs, which makes ſo great a part of the Grammar of all Languages.

It now clearly appears, as I before obſerved, that, of all the parts of Speech, verbs are, by far, the moſt artificial and complex. Conſider only, how many things are denoted by this ſingle Latin word "*amaviſſem*, I would have loved." Firſt, The perſon who ſpeaks, "I." Secondly, An attribute or action of that perſon, "loving." Thirdly, An affirmation concerning that action. Fourthly, The paſt time denoted in that affirmation, "have loved:" and, Fifthly, A condition on which the action is ſuſpended, "would have loved." It appears curious and remarkable, that words of this complex import, and with more or leſs of this artificial ſtructure, are to be found, as far as we know, in all Languages of the world.

Indeed, the form of conjugation, or the manner of expreſſing all theſe varieties in the verb, differs greatly in different Tongues. Conjugation is eſteemed moſt perfect in thoſe Languages which by varying either the termination or the initial ſyllable of the verb, expreſs the greateſt number of important circumſtances, without the help of auxiliary words. In the Oriental Tongues, the verbs are ſaid to have few tenſes, or expreſſions of time; but then their moods are ſo contrived, as to expreſs a great variety of circumſtances and relations. In the Hebrew, for inſtance, they ſay, in one word, without the help of any auxiliary, not only "I have taught," but, "I have taught exactly, or often; I have been commanded to teach; I have taught myſelf." The Greek, which is the moſt perfect of all the known Tongues,

Tongues, is very regular and complete in all the tenſes and moods. The Latin is formed on the ſame model, but more imperfect; eſpecially in the paſſive voice, which forms moſt of the tenſes by the help of the auxiliary verb "*ſum.*"

In all the modern European Tongues, conjugation is very defective. They admit few varieties in the termination of the verb itſelf; but have almoſt conſtant recourſe to their auxiliary verbs, throughout all the moods and tenſes, both active and paſſive. Language has undergone a change in conjugation, perfectly ſimilar to that which, I ſhowed in the laſt Lecture, it underwent with reſpect to declenſion. As prepoſitions, prefixed to the noun, ſuperſeded the uſe of caſes; ſo the two great auxiliary verbs, to *have*, and to *be*, with thoſe other auxiliaries which we uſe in Engliſh, *do*, *ſhall*, *will*, *may*, and *can*, prefixed to the participle, ſuperſede, in a great meaſure, the different terminations of moods and tenſes, which formed the ancient conjugations.

The alteration, in both caſes, was owing to the ſame cauſe, and will be eaſily underſtood, from reflecting on what was formerly obſerved. The auxiliary verbs are, like prepoſitions, words of a general and abſtract nature. They imply the different modifications of ſimple exiſtence, conſidered alone, and without reference to any particular thing. In the early ſtate of Speech, the import of them would be incorporated, ſo to ſpeak, with every particular verb in its tenſes and moods, long before words were invented for denoting ſuch abſtract conceptions of exiſtence, alone, and by themſelves. But after thoſe auxiliary verbs came, in the progreſs of Language, to be invented and known, and to have tenſes and moods given to them like other verbs; it was found, that as they carried in their nature the force of that affirmation which diſtinguiſhes the verb, they might by being joined with the participle which gives the meaning of the verb, ſupply the place of moſt of the moods and tenſes. Hence, as the Modern Tongues began to [illegible] of the ancient, this method eſtabliſhed it[illegible]nation of Speech. Such words, for inſtance; [illegible]*ve*, *ſhall*, being once familiar, it appeared more [illegible]ly theſe to any verb whatever; as, *I am loved: I*

was

was loved; I have loved; than to remember that variety of terminations which were requiſite in conjugating the ancient verbs, *amor, amabar, amavi,* &c. Two or three varieties only, in the termination of the verb, were retained, as *love, loved, loving;* and all the reſt were dropt. The conſequence, however, of this practice, was the ſame as that of aboliſhing declenſions. It rendered Language more ſimple and eaſy in its ſtructure; but withal, more prolix, and leſs graceful. This finiſhes all that ſeemed moſt neceſſary to be obſerved with reſpect to verbs.

The remaining parts of Speech, which are called the indeclinable parts, or that admit of no variations, will not detain us long.

Adverbs are the firſt that occur. Theſe form a very numerous claſs of words in every Language, reducible, in general, to the head of attributives; as they ſerve to modify, or to denote ſome circumſtance of an action, or of a quality, relative to its time, place, order, degree, and the other properties, of it, which we have occaſion to ſpecify. They are, for the moſt part, no more than an abridged mode of Speech, expreſſing, by one word, what might, by a circumlocution, be reſolved into two or more words belonging to the other parts of Speech. "Exceedingly," for inſtance, is the ſame as, "in a high degree;" "bravely," the ſame as, "with bravery or valour;" "here," the ſame as, "in this place;" "often, and ſeldom," the ſame as, "for many and for few times:" and ſo of the reſt. Hence, adverbs may be conceived as of leſs neceſſity, and of later introduction into the ſyſtem of Speech, than many other claſſes of words; and, accordingly, the great body of them are derived from other words formerly eſtabliſhed in the Language.

Prepoſitions and conjunctions, are words more eſſential to diſcourſe than the greateſt part of adverbs. They form that claſs of words, called connectives, without which there could be no Language; ſerving to expreſs the relations which things bear to one another, their mutual influence, dependencies, and coherence; thereby joining words together into intelligible and ſignificant propoſitions. Conjunctions are generally employed for connecting ſentences, or members of ſentences; as, *and, becauſe, although,* and the like. Prepoſitions are employed for connecting

connecting words, by ſhowing the relation which one ſubſtantive noun bears to another; as, *of, from, to, above, below*, &c. Of the force of theſe I had occaſion to ſpeak before, when treating of the caſes and declenſions of ſubſtantive nouns.

It is abundantly evident, that all theſe connective particles muſt be of the greateſt uſe in Speech; ſeeing they point out the relations and tranſitions by which the mind paſſes from one idea to another. They are the foundations of all reaſoning, which is no other thing than the connexion of thoughts. And, therefore, though among barbarous nations, and in the rude uncivilized ages of the world, the ſtock of theſe words might be ſmall, it muſt always have increaſed, as mankind advanced in the arts of reaſoning and reflection. The more any nation is improved by ſcience, and the more perfect their Language becomes, we may naturally expect, that it will abound the more with connective particles; expreſſing relations of things, and tranſitions of thought, which had eſcaped a groſſer view. Accordingly, no tongue is ſo full of them as the Greek, in conſequence of the acute and ſubtile genius of that refined people. In every Language, much of the beauty and ſtrength of it depends on the proper uſe of conjunctions, prepoſitions, and thoſe relative pronouns, which alſo ſerve the ſame purpoſe of connecting the different parts of diſcourſe. It is the right, or wrong management of theſe, which chiefly makes diſcourſe appear firm and compacted, or disjointed and looſe; which cauſes it to march with a ſmooth and even pace, or with gouty and hobbling ſteps.

I ſhall dwell no longer on the general conſtruction of Language. Allow me, only, before I diſmiſs the ſubject, to obſerve, that dry and intricate as it may ſeem to ſome, it is, however, of great importance, and very nearly connected with the philoſophy of the human mind. For, if Speech be the vehicle, or interpreter of the conceptions of our minds, an examination of its Structure and Progreſs cannot but unfold many things concerning the nature and progreſs of our conceptions themſelves, e operations of our faculties; a ſubject that is always ive to man, "Nequis," ſays Quintilian, an author of it judgment, "nequis tanquam parva faſtidiat gramma- elementa. Non quia magnæ ſit operæ conſonantes a us diſcernere, eaſque in ſemivocalium numerum, mu-

" tarumque

" tarumque partiri, ſed quia interiora velut ſacri hujus adeunti-
" bus, apparebit multa rerum ſubtilitas, quæ non modo acuere
" ingenia puerilia, ſed exercere altiſſimam quoque eruditionem
" ac ſcientiam poſſit."* 1. 4.

Let us now come nearer to our own Language. In this, and the preceding Lecture, ſome obſervations have already been made on its Structure. But it is proper, that we ſhould be a little more particular in the examination of it.

The Language which is, at preſent, ſpoken throughout Great Britain, is neither the ancient primitive Speech of the iſland, nor derived from it; but is altogether of foreign origin. The Language of the firſt inhabitants of our iſland, beyond doubt, was the Celtic, or Gaelic, common to them with Gaul; from which country, it appears, by many circumſtances, that Great Britain was peopled. This Celtic Tongue, which is ſaid to be very expreſſive and copious, and is, probably, one of the moſt ancient Languages in the world, obtained once in moſt of the weſtern regions of Europe. It was the Language of Gaul, of Great Britain, of Ireland, and, very probably, of Spain alſo; till, in the courſe of thoſe revolutions, which, by means of the conqueſts, firſt, of the Romans, and afterwards, of the northern nations, changed the government, Speech, and, in a manner, the whole face of Europe, this Tongue was gradually obliterated; and now ſubſiſts only in the mountains of Wales, in the Highlands of Scotland, and among the wild Iriſh. For the Iriſh, the Welſh, and the Erſe, are no other than different dialects of the ſame Tongue, the ancient Celtic.

This, then, was the Language of the primitive Britons, the firſt inhabitants, that we know of, in our iſland; and continued ſo till the arrival of the Saxons in England, in the year of our Lord 450; who, having conquered the Britons, did not intermix with them, but expelled them from their habitations, and drove them, together with their Language, into the mountains of Wales. The Saxons were one of theſe northern nations

* "Let no man deſpiſe, as inconſiderable, the elements of grammar, becauſe they ſeem to him a matter of ſmall conſequence, to ſhew the diſtinction between vowels and conſonants, and to divide the latter into liquids and mutes. But they who penetrate into the innermoſt parts of this temple of ſcience, will there diſcover ſuch refinement and ſubtilty of matter, as is not only proper to ſharpen the underſtandings of young men, but ſufficient to give exerciſe for the moſt profound knowledge and erudition."

tions that over-ran Europe; and their Tongue, a dialect of the Gothic or Teutonic, altogether distinct from the Celtic, laid the foundation of the present English Tongue. With some intermixture of Danish, a Language, probably, from the same root with the Saxon, it continued to be spoken throughout the southern part of the island, till the time of William the Conqueror. He introduced the Norman or French as the Language of the court, which made a considerable change in the Speech of the nation; and the English, which was spoken afterwards, and continues to be spoken now, is a mixture of the ancient Saxon, and this Norman French, together with such new and foreign words as commerce and learning have, in progress of time, gradually introduced.

The history of the English Language, can, in this manner, be clearly traced. The Language spoken in the low countries of Scotland now, and has been for many centuries, no other than a dialect of the English. How, indeed, or by what steps, the ancient Celtic Tongue came to be banished from the Low Country in Scotland, and to make its retreat into the Highlands and Islands, cannot be so well pointed out, as how the like revolution was brought about in England. Whether the southernmost part of Scotland was once subject to the Saxons, and formed a part of the kingdom of Northumberland; or, whether the great number of English exiles that retreated into Scotland, upon the Norman conquest, and upon other occasions, introduced into that country their own Language, which afterwards, by the mutual intercourse of the two nations, prevailed over the Celtic, are uncertain and contested points, the discussion of which would lead us too far from our subject.

From what has been said it appears, that the Teutonic dialect is the basis of our present Speech. It has been imported among us, in three different forms, the Saxon, the Danish, and the Norman; all which have mingled together in our Language. A very great number of our words too, are plainly derived from the ... These, we had not directly from the Latin, but most ...hem, it is probable, entered into our Tongue through the ...el of that Norman French, which William the Conqueror ...oduced. For, as the Romans had long been in full pos... of Gaul, the Language spoken in that country, when it

was invaded by the Franks and Normans, was a ſort of corrupted Latin, mingled with Celtic, to which was given the name of Romanſhe: and as the Franks and Normans did not, like the Saxons in England, expel the inhabitants, but, after their victories, mingled with them; the Language of the country became a compound of the Teutonic dialect imported by theſe conquerors, and of the former corrupted Latin. Hence, the French Language has always continued to have a very conſiderable affinity with the Latin; and hence, a great number of words of Latin origin, which were in uſe among the Normans in France, were introduced into our Tongue at the conqueſt; to which, indeed, many have ſince been added, directly from the Latin, in conſequence of the great diffuſion of Roman literature throughout all Europe.

From the influx of ſo many ſtreams, from the junction of ſo many diſſimilar parts, it naturally follows, that the Engliſh, like every compounded Language, muſt needs be ſomewhat irregular. We cannot expect from it that correſpondence of parts, that complete analogy in ſtructure, which may be found in thoſe ſimpler Languages, which have been formed in a manner within themſelves, and built on one foundation. Hence, as I before ſhowed, it has but ſmall remains of conjugation or declenſion; and its ſyntax is narrow, as there are few marks in the words themſelves that can ſhow their relation to each other, or, in the grammatical ſtyle, point out either their concordance, or their government, in the ſentence. Our words having been brought to us from ſeveral different regions, ſtraggle, if we may ſo ſpeak, aſunder from each other, and do not coaleſce ſo naturally in the ſtructure of a ſentence, as the words in the Greek and Roman Tongues.

But theſe diſadvantages, if they be ſuch, of a compound Language, are balanced by other advantages that attend it; particularly, by the number and variety of words with which ſuch a Language is likely to be enriched. Few Languages are, in fact, more copious than the Engliſh. In all grave ſubjects, eſpecially, hiſtorical, critical, political, and moral, no writer has the leaſt reaſon to complain of the barrenneſs of our Tongue. The ſtudious reflecting genius of the people has brought together great ſtore of expreſſions, on ſuch ſubjects, from every quarter. We are rich too in the Language of poetry. Our poet-

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ical ſtyle differs widely from proſe, not in point of numbers only, but in the very words themſelves; which ſhows what a ſtock and compaſs of words we have it in our power to ſelect and employ, ſuited to thoſe different occaſions. Herein we are infinitely ſuperior to the French, whoſe poetical Language, if it were not diſtinguiſhed by rhyme, would not be known to differ from their ordinary proſe.

It is chiefly, indeed, on grave ſubjects, and with reſpect to the ſtronger emotions of the mind, that our Language diſplays its power of expreſſion. We are ſaid to have thirty words, at leaſt, for denoting all the varieties of the paſſion of anger.* But, in deſcribing the more delicate ſentiments and emotions, our Tongue is not ſo fertile. It muſt be confeſſed, that the French Language ſurpaſſes ours, by far, in expreſſing the nicer ſhades of character; eſpecially thoſe varieties of manner, temper and behaviour, which are diſplayed in our ſocial intercourſe with one another. Let any one attempt to tranſlate, into Engliſh, only a few pages of one of Marivaux's Novels, and he will ſoon be ſenſible of our deficiency of expreſſion on theſe ſubjects. Indeed, no Language is ſo copious as the French for whatever is delicate, gay, and amuſing. It is, perhaps, the happieſt Language for converſation in the known world; but, on the higher ſubjects of compoſition, the Engliſh may be juſtly eſteemed to excel it conſiderably.

Language is generally underſtood to receive its predominant tincture from the national character of the people who ſpeak it. We muſt not, indeed, expect, that it will carry an exact and full impreſſion of their genius and manners; for, among all nations, the original ſtock of words which they received from their anceſtors, remains as the foundation of their Speech throughout many ages, while their manners undergo, perhaps, very great alterations. National character will, however, always have ſome perceptible influence on the turn of Language; and the gaiety and vivacity of the French, and the gravity and thoughtfulneſs of the Engliſh, are ſufficiently impreſſon their reſpective Tongues.

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* Anger, wrath, paſſion, rage, fury, outrage, fierceneſs, ſharpneſs, animoſity, choler, reſentment, heat, heart-burning; to fume, ſtorm, inflame, be incenſed, vex, kindle, irritate, enrage, exaſperate, provoke, fret; to be ſullen, haſty, rough, ſour, peeviſh, &c. Preface to Greenwood's Grammar.

From the genius of our Language, and the character of thoſe who ſpeak it, it may be expected to have ſtrength and energy. It is, indeed, naturally prolix; owing to the great number of particles and auxiliary verbs which we are obliged conſtantly to employ: and this prolixity muſt, in ſome degree, enfeeble it. We ſeldom can expreſs ſo much by one word as was done by the verbs, and by the nouns, in the Greek and Roman Languages. Our ſtyle is leſs compact; our conceptions being ſpread out among more words, and ſplit, as it were, into more parts, make a fainter impreſſion when we utter them. Notwithſtanding this defect, by our abounding in terms for expreſſing all the ſtrong emotions of the mind, and by the liberty which we enjoy, in a greater degree than moſt nations, of compounding words, our Language may be eſteemed to poſſeſs conſiderable force of expreſſion; comparatively, at leaſt, with the other Modern Tongues; though much below the ancient. The Style of Milton alone, both in poetry and proſe, is a ſufficient proof, that the Engliſh Tongue is far from being deſtitute of nerves and energy.

The flexibility of a Language, or its power of accommodation to different ſtyles and manners, ſo as to be either grave and ſtrong, or eaſy and flowing, or tender and gentle, or pompous and magnificent, as occaſions require, or as an author's genius prompts, is a quality of great importance in ſpeaking and writing. It ſeems to depend upon three things; the copiouſneſs of a Language; the different arrangements of which its words are ſuſceptible; and the variety and beauty of the ſound of thoſe words, ſo as to correſpond to many different ſubjects. Never did any Tongue poſſeſs this quality ſo eminently as the Greek, which every writer of genius could ſo mould, as to make the ſtyle perfectly expreſſive of his own manner and peculiar turn. It had all the three requiſites, which I have mentioned, as neceſſary for this purpoſe. It joined to theſe the graceful variety of its different dialects; and thereby readily aſſumed every ſort of character which an author could wiſh, from the moſt ſimple and moſt familiar, up to the moſt majeſtic. The Latin, though a very beautiful Language, is inferior, in this reſpect, to the Greek. It has more of a fixed character of ſtateline ſs and gravity. It is always firm and maſculine in the tenor of its ſound; and is ſupported by a certain ſenatorial dignity, of

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which it is difficult for a writer to diveſt it wholly, on any occaſion. Among the Modern Tongues, the Italian poſſeſſes a great deal more of this flexibility than the French. By its copiouſneſs, its freedom of arrangement, and the great beauty and harmony of its ſounds, it ſuits itſelf very happily to moſt ſubjects, either in proſe or in poetry; is capable of the auguſt and the ſtrong, as well as the tender; and ſeems to be, on the whole, the moſt perfect of all the modern dialects which have ariſen out of the ruins of the ancient. Our own Language, though not equal to the Italian in flexibility, yet is not deſtitute of a conſiderable degree of this quality. If any one will conſider the diverſity of ſtyle which appears in ſome of our claſſics; that great difference of manner, for inſtance, which is marked by the ſtyle of Lord Shaftſbury, and that of Dean Swift; he will ſee, in our Tongue, ſuch a circle of expreſſion, ſuch a power of accommodation to the different taſte of writers, as redounds not a little to its honour.

What the Engliſh has been moſt taxed with, is its deficiency in harmony of ſound. But though every native is apt to be partial to the ſounds of his own Language, and may, therefore, be ſuſpected of not being a fair judge in this point; yet, I imagine, there are evident grounds on which it may be ſhown, that this charge againſt our Tongue has been carried too far. The melody of our verſification, its power of ſupporting poetical numbers, without any aſſiſtance from rhyme, is alone a ſufficient proof that our Language is far from being unmuſical. Our verſe is, after the Italian, the moſt diverſified and harmonious of any of the modern dialects; unqueſtionably far beyond the French verſe, in variety, ſweetneſs, and melody. Mr. Sheridan has ſhown, in his Lectures, that we abound more in vowel and diphthong ſounds, than moſt Languages; and theſe too, ſo divided into long and ſhort, as to afford a proper diverſity in the quantity of our ſyllables. Our conſonants, he obſerves, which appears ſo crowded to the eye on paper, often m combinations not diſagreeable to the ear in pronouncing; l, in particular, the objection which has been made to the quent recurrence of the hiſſing conſonant *s* in our Language, injuſt and ill-founded. For, it has not been attended to, at very commonly, and in the final ſyllables eſpecially, this tter loſes altogether the hiſſing ſound, and is transformed into

into a z, which is one of the ſounds on which the ear reſts with pleaſure; as in *has*, *theſe*, *thoſe*, *loves*, *bears*, and innumerable more, where, though the letter *s* be retained in writing, it has really the power of z, not of the common *s*.

After all, however, it muſt be admitted, that ſmoothneſs, or beauty of ſound, is none of the diſtinguiſhing properties of the Engliſh Tongue. Though not incapable of being formed into melodious arrangements, yet ſtrength and expreſſiveneſs, more than grace, form its character. We incline, in general, to a ſhort pronunciation of our words, and have ſhortened the quantity of moſt of thoſe which we borrow from the Latin, as *orator*, *ſpectacle*, *theatre*, *liberty*, and ſuch like. Agreeable to this, is a remarkable peculiarity of Engliſh pronunciation, the throwing the accent farther back, that is, nearer the beginning of the word, than is done by any other nation. In Greek and Latin, no word is accented farther back than the third ſyllable from the end, or what is called the antepenult. But, in Engliſh, we have many words accented on the fourth, ſome on the fifth ſyllable from the end, as, *mêmorable*, *convêniency*, *âmbulatory*, *prôfitableneſs*. The general effect of this practice of haſtening the accent, or placing it ſo near the beginning of a word, is to give a briſk and a ſpirited but at the ſame time, a rapid and hurried, and not a very muſical, tone to the whole pronunciation of a people.

The Engliſh Tongue poſſeſſes, undoubtedly, this property, of being the moſt ſimple in its form and conſtruction, of all the European dialects. It is free from all intricacy of caſes, declenſions, moods and tenſes. Its words are ſubject to fewer variations from their original form than thoſe of any other Language. Its ſubſtantives have no diſtinction of gender, except what nature has made, and but one variation in caſe. Its adjectives admit of no change at all, except what expreſſes the degree of compariſon. Its verbs, inſtead of running through all the varieties of ancient conjugation, ſuffer no more than four or five changes in termination. By the help of a few prepoſitions and auxiliary verbs, all the purpoſes of ſignificancy in meaning are accompliſhed; while the words for the moſt part, preſerve their form unchanged. The diſadvantages in point of elegance, brevity, and force, which follow from this ſtructure of our Language, I have before pointed out. But at the ſame time,

time, it must be admitted, that such a structure contributes to facility. It renders the acquisition of our Language less laborious, the arrangement of our words more plain and obvious, the rules of our syntax fewer and more simple.

I agree, indeed, with Dr. Lowth, (preface to his Grammar) in thinking that this very simplicity and facility of our Language proves a cause of its being frequently written and spoken with less accuracy. It was necessary to study Languages which were of a more complex and artificial form, with greater care. The marks of gender and case, the varieties of conjugation and declension, the multiplied rules of syntax, were all to be attended to in speech. Hence Language became more an object of art. It was reduced into form; a standard was established; and any departures from the standard became conspicuous. Whereas, among us, Language is hardly considered as an object of grammatical rule. We take it for granted, that a competent skill in it may be acquired without any study; and that, in a syntax so narrow and confined as ours, there is nothing which demands attention. Hence arises the habit of writing in a loose and inaccurate manner.

I admit, that no grammatical rules have sufficient authority to control the firm and established usage of Language. Established custom in speaking and writing, is the standard to which we must at last resort for determining every controverted point in Language and Style. But it will not follow from this, that grammatical rules are superseded as useless. In every Language, which has been in any degree cultivated, there prevails a certain structure and analogy of parts, which is understood to give foundation to the most reputable usage of Speech; and which, in all cases, when usage is loose or dubious, possesses considerable authority. In every Language, there are rules of syntax which must be inviolably observed by all who would either write or speak with any propriety. For syntax is no other than that arrangement of words, in a sentence, which renders the meaning of each word, and the relation of all the words one another, most clear and intelligible.

All the rules of Latin syntax, it is true, cannot be applied to our Language. Many of those rules arose from the particular form of their Language, which occasioned verbs or prepositions to govern,

ern, ſome the genitive, ſome the dative, ſome the accuſative or ablative caſe. But, abſtracting from theſe peculiarities, it is to be always remembered, that the chief and fundamental rules of ſyntax are common to the Engliſh as well as the Latin Tongue; and, indeed, belong equally to all Languages. For, in all Languages, the parts which compoſe Speech are eſſentially the ſame; ſubſtantives, adjectives, verbs, and connecting particles: and wherever theſe parts of Speech are found, there are certain neceſſary relations among them, which regulate their ſyntax, or the place which they ought to poſſeſs in a ſentence. Thus, in Engliſh, juſt as much as in Latin, the adjective muſt, by poſition, be made to agree with its ſubſtantive; and the verb muſt agree with its nominative in perſon and number; becauſe, from the nature of things, a word, which expreſſes either a quality or an action, muſt correſpond as cloſely as poſſible with the name of that thing whoſe quality, or whoſe action, it expreſſes. Two or more ſubſtantives, joined by a copulative, muſt always require the verbs or pronouns, to which they refer, to be placed in the plural number; otherwiſe, their common relation to thoſe verbs or pronouns is not pointed out. An active verb muſt, in every Language, govern the accuſative; that is, clearly point out ſome ſubſtantive noun, as the object to which its action is directed. A relative pronoun muſt, in every form of Speech, agree with its antecedent in gender, number, and perſon; and conjunctions, or connecting particles, ought always to couple like caſes and moods; that is, ought to join together words which are of the ſame form and ſtate with each other. I mention theſe, as a few exemplifications of that fundamental regard to ſyntax, which, even in ſuch a Language as ours, is abſolutely requiſite for writing or ſpeaking with any propriety.

Whatever the advantages, or defects of the Engliſh Language be, as it is our own Language, it deſerves a high degree of our ſtudy and attention, both with regard to the choice of words which we employ, and with regard to the ſyntax, or the arrangement of theſe words in a ſentence. We know how much the Greeks and the Romans, in their moſt poliſhed and flouriſhi times, cultivated their own Tongues. We know how mucl ſtudy both the French, and the Italians, have beſtowed upo their. Whatever knowledge may be acquired by the ſtudy c

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other Languages, it can never be communicated with advantage, unleſs by ſuch as can write and ſpeak their own Language well. Let the matter of an author be ever ſo good and uſeful, his compoſitions will always ſuffer in the public eſteem, if his expreſſion be deficient in purity and propriety. At the ſame time, the attainment of a correct and elegant ſtyle, is an object which demands application and labour. If any imagine they can catch it merely by the ear, or acquire it by a ſlight peruſal of ſome of our good authors, they will find themſelves much diſappointed. The many errors, even in point of grammar, the many offences againſt purity of Language, which are committed by writers who are far from being contemptible, demonſtrate, that a careful ſtudy of the Language is previouſly requiſite, in all who aim at writing it properly.*

* On this ſubject, the Reader ought to peruſe Dr. Lowth's Short Introduction to Engliſh Grammar, with Critical Notes; which is the grammatical performance of higheſt authority that has appeared in our time, and in which he will ſee, what I have ſaid concerning the inaccuracies in Language of ſome of our beſt writers, fully verified. In Dr. Campbell's Philoſophy of Rhetoric, he will likewiſe find many acute and ingenious obſervations, both on the Engliſh Language, and on Style in general. And Dr. Prieſtley's Rudiments of Engliſh Grammar will alſo be uſeful, by pointing out ſeveral of the errors into which writers are apt to fall.

LECTURE X.

STYLE. PERSPICUITY AND PRECISION.

HAVING finiſhed the ſubject of Language, I now enter on the conſideration of Style, and the rules that relate to it.

It is not eaſy to give a preciſe idea of what is meant by Style. The beſt definition I can give of it is, the peculiar manner in which a man expreſſes his conceptions, by means of Language. It is different from mere Language or words. The words, which an author employs, may be proper and faultleſs; and his Style may, nevertheleſs, have great faults; it may be dry, or ſtiff, or feeble, or affected. Style has always ſome reference to an author's manner of thinking. It is a picture of the ideas which riſe in his mind, and of the manner in which they riſe there; and, hence, when we are examining an author's compoſition, it is, in many caſes, extremely difficult to ſeparate the Style from the ſentiment. No wonder theſe two ſhould be ſo intimately connected, as Style is nothing elſe, than that ſort of expreſſion which our thoughts moſt readily aſſume. Hence, different countries have been noted for peculiarities of Style, ſuited to their different temper and genius. The eaſtern nations animated their Style with the moſt ſtrong and hyperbolical figures. The Athenians, a poliſhed and acute people, formed a Style accurate, clear, and neat. The Aſiatics, gay and looſe in their manners, affected a Style florid and diffuſe. The like ſort of characteriſtical differences are commonly remarked in the Style of the French, the Engliſh, and the Spaniards. In giving the general characters of Style, it is uſual to talk of a nervous, a feeble, or a ſpirited Style; which are plainly the characters of a writer's manner of thinking, as well as of expreſſing himſelf: So difficult it is to ſeparate theſe two things from one another. Of the general characters of Style,

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I am afterwards to diſcourſe; but it will be neceſſary to begin with examining the more ſimple qualities of it; from the aſſemblage of which, its more complex denominations, in a great meaſure, reſult.

All the qualities of a good Style may be ranged under two heads, Perſpicuity and Ornament. For all that can poſſibly be required of Language, is, to convey our ideas clearly to the minds of others, and, at the ſame time, in ſuch a dreſs, as by pleaſing and intereſting them, ſhall moſt effectually ſtrengthen the impreſſions which we ſeek to make. When both theſe ends are anſwered, we certainly accompliſh every purpoſe for which we uſe Writing and Diſcourſe.

Perſpicuity, it will be readily admitted, is the fundamental quality of Style;* a quality ſo eſſential in every kind of writing, that, for the want of it, nothing can atone. Without this, ornaments of Style only glimmer through the dark; and puzzle, inſtead of pleaſing the reader. This, therefore, muſt be our firſt object, to make our meaning clearly and fully underſtood, and underſtood without the leaſt difficulty. "Oratio," ſays Quintilian, "debet negligenter quoque audientibus eſſe "aperta; ut in animum audientis, ſicut ſol in oculos, etiamſi in "eum non indendatur, occurrat. Quare, non ſolum ut intel"ligere poſſit, ſed ne omnino poſſit non intelligere curandum."†

If we are obliged to follow a writer with much care, to pauſe, and to read over his ſentences a ſecond time, in order to comprehend them fully, he will never pleaſe us long. Mankind are too indolent to reliſh ſo much labour. They may pretend to admire the author's depth, after they have diſcovered his meaning; but they will ſeldom be inclined to take up his work a ſecond time.

Authors ſometimes plead the difficulty of their ſubject, as an excuſe for the want of Perſpicuity. But the excuſe can rarely, if ever, be admitted. For whatever a man conceives clearly,

* "Nobis prima ſit virtus, perſpicuitas, propria verba, rectus ordo, non in "longum dilata concluſio; nihil neque deeſt, neque ſuperfluat."
QUINTIL., lib. viii.

† "Diſcourſe ought always to be obvious, even to the moſt careleſs and neg"ligent hearer; ſo that the ſenſe ſhall ſtrike his mind, as the light of the ſun "does our eyes, though they are not directed upwards to it. We muſt ſtudy "not only that every hearer may underſtand us, but that it ſhall be impoſſi"ble for him not to underſtand us."

clearly, that, it is in his power, if he will be at the trouble, to put into distinct propositions, or to express clearly to others: and upon no subject ought any man to write, where he cannot think clearly. His ideas, indeed, may, very excusably, be on some subjects incomplete or inadequate; but still, as far as they go, they ought to be clear; and wherever this is the case, Perspicuity, in expressing them, is always attainable. The obscurity which reigns so much among many metaphysical writers, is, for the most part, owing to the indistinctness of their own conceptions. They see the object but in a confused light; and, of course, can never exhibit it in a clear one to others.

Perspicuity in writing, is not to be considered as only a sort of negative virtue, or freedom from defect. It has higher merit: It is a degree of positive beauty. We are pleased with an author, we consider him as deserving praise, who frees us from all fatigue of searching for his meaning; who carries us through his subject without any embarrassment or confusion; whose style flows always like a limpid stream, where we see to the very bottom.

The study of Perspicuity requires attention, first, to single words and phrases, and then to the construction of sentences. I begin with treating of the first, and shall confine myself to it in this Lecture.

Perspicuity, considered with respect to words and phrases, requires these three qualities in them, *Purity*, *Propriety* and *Precision*.

Purity and Propriety of Language are often used indiscriminately for each other; and, indeed, they are very nearly allied. A distinction, however, obtains between them. Purity is the use of such words, and such constructions, as belong to the idiom of the Language which we speak; in opposition to words and phrases that are imported from other Languages, or that are obsolete, or new coined, or used without proper authority. Propriety, is the selection of such words in the Language, as the best and most established usage has appropriated to those ideas which we intend to express by them. It implies the correct and happy application of them, according to that usage, in opposition to vulgarisms or low expressions; and to words and phrases, which would be less significant of

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the ideas that we mean to convey. Style may be pure, that is, it may all be ſtrictly Engliſh, without Scotticiſms or Gallicifms, or ungrammatical irregular expreſſions of any kind, and may, nevertheleſs, be deficient in Propriety. The words may be ill-choſen; not adapted to the ſubject, nor fully expreſſive of the author's ſenſe. He has taken all his words and phraſes from the general maſs of Engliſh Language; but he has made his ſelection among theſe words unhappily. Whereas, Style cannot be proper without being alſo pure; and where both Purity and Propriety meet, beſides making Style perſpicuous, they alſo render it graceful. There is no ſtandard, either of Purity or of Propriety, but the practice of the beſt writers and ſpeakers in the country.

When I mentioned obſolete or new-coined words as incongruous with Purity of Style, it will be eaſily underſtood, that ſome exceptions are to be made. On certain occaſions, they may have grace. Poetry admits of greater latitude than proſe, with reſpect to coining, or, at leaſt, new-compounding words; yet, even here, this liberty ſhould be uſed with a ſparing hand. In proſe, ſuch innovations are more hazardous, and have a worſe effect. They are apt to give Style an affected and conceited air; and ſhould never be ventured upon, except by ſuch, whoſe eſtabliſhed reputation gives them ſome degree of dictatorial power over Language.

The introduction of foreign and learned words, unleſs where neceſſity requires them, ſhould always be avoided. Barren Languages may need ſuch aſſiſtances; but ours is not one of theſe. Dean Swift, one of our moſt correct writers, valued himſelf much on uſing no words but ſuch as were of native growth: and his Language may, indeed, be conſidered as a ſtandard of the ſtricteſt Purity and Propriety in the choice of words. At preſent, we ſeem to be departing from this ſtandard. A multitude of Latin words have, of late, been poured in upon us. On ſome occaſions, they give an appearance of elevation and dignity to Style. But often, alſo, they render it ſtiff and forced: and, in general, a plain native Style, as it is more intelligible to all readers, ſo, by a proper management of words, it can be made equally ſtrong and expreſſive with this Latiniſed Engliſh.

Let

Let us now consider the import of Precision in Language, which, as it is the highest part of the quality denoted by Perspicuity, merits a full explication; and the more, because distinct ideas are, perhaps, not commonly formed about it.

(The exact import of Precision may be drawn from the etymology of the word. It comes from "precidere," to cut off: It imports retrenching all superfluities, and pruning the expression so, as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of his idea who uses it.) I observed before, that it is often difficult to separate the qualities of Style from the qualities of Thought; and it is found so in this instance. For, in order to write with Precision, though this be properly a quality of Style, one must possess a very considerable degree of distinctness and accuracy in his manner of thinking.

(The words, which a man uses to express his ideas, may be faulty in three respects: They may either not express that idea which the author intends, but some other which only resembles, or is akin to it; or, they may express that idea, but not quite fully and completely; or, they may express it, together with something more than he intends. Precision stands opposed to all these three faults; but chiefly to the last.) In an author's writing with Propriety, his being free of the two former faults seems implied. The words which he uses are proper; that is, they express that idea which he intends, and they express it fully; but to be precise, signifies, that they express that idea, and no more. There is nothing in his words which introduces any foreign idea, any superfluous unseasonable accessory, so as to mix it confusedly with the principal object, and thereby to render our conception of that object loose and indistinct. This requires a writer to have, himself, a very clear apprehension of the object he means to present to us; to have laid fast hold of it in his mind; and never to waver in any one view he takes of it: a perfection to which, indeed, few writers attain.

The use and importance of Precision, may be deduced from the nature of the human mind. It never can view, clearly and distinctly, above one object at a time. If it must look at two or three together, especially objects among which there is resemblance or connexion, it finds itself confused and embarrassed.

raſſed. It cannot clearly perceive in what they agree, and in what they differ. Thus, were any object, ſuppoſe ſome animal, to be preſented to me, of whoſe ſtructure I wanted to form a diſtinct notion, I would deſire all its trappings to be taken off, I would require it to be brought before me by itſelf, and to ſtand alone, that there might be nothing to diſtract my attention. The ſame is the caſe with words. If, when you would inform me of your meaning, you alſo tell me more than what conveys it; if you join foreign circumſtances to the principal object; if, by unneceſſarily varying the expreſſion, you ſhift the point of view, and make me ſee ſometimes the object itſelf and ſometimes another thing that is connected with it; you thereby oblige me to look on ſeveral objects at once, and I loſe ſight of the principal. You load the animal you are ſhowing me, with ſo many trappings and collars, and bring ſo many of the ſame ſpecies before me, ſomewhat reſembling, and yet ſomewhat differing, that I ſee none of them clearly.

This forms what is called a Looſe Style; and is the proper oppoſite to Preciſion. It generally ariſes from uſing a ſuperfluity of words. (Feeble writers employ a multitude of words to make themſelves underſtood, as they think more diſtinctly; and they only confound the reader.) They are ſenſible of not having caught the preciſe expreſſion, to convey what they would ſignify; they do not, indeed, conceive their own meaning very preciſely themſelves; and, therefore, help it out, as they can, by this and the other word, which may, as they ſuppoſe, ſupply the defect, and bring you ſomewhat nearer to their idea: they are always going about it, and about it, but never juſt hit the thing. (The image, as they ſet it before you, is always ſeen double;) and no double image is diſtinct. (When an author tells me of his hero's *courage* in the day of battle, the expreſſion is preciſe, and I underſtand it fully. But if, from the deſire of multiplying words, he will needs praiſe his *courage* and *fortitude*; at the moment he joins theſe words together, my idea begins to waver. He means to expreſs one quality more ſtrongly; but he is, in truth, expreſſing two. *Courage* reſiſts danger; *fortitude* ſupports pain. The occaſion of exerting each of theſe qualities is different; and being led to think of both together, when only one of them ſhould be in my view, my view is rendered unſteady, and my conception of the object indiſtinct.)

From

From what I have ſaid, it appears that an author may, in a qualified ſenſe, be perſpicuous, while yet he is far from being preciſe. He uſes proper words, and proper arrangement; he gives you the idea as clear as he conceives it himſelf; and ſo far he is perſpicuous: but the ideas are not very clear in his own mind; they are looſe and general; and, therefore, cannot be expreſſed with Preciſion. All ſubjects do not equally require Preciſion. It is ſufficient, on many occaſions, that we have a general view of the meaning. The ſubject, perhaps, is of the known and familiar kind; and we are in no hazard of miſtaking the ſenſe of the author, though every word which he uſes be not preciſe and exact.

Few authors, for inſtance, in the Engliſh Language, are more clear and perſpicuous, on the whole, than Archbiſhop Tillotſon, and Sir William Temple; yet neither of them are remarkable for Preciſion. They are looſe and diffuſe; and accuſtomed to expreſs their meaning by ſeveral words, which ſhow you fully whereabouts it lies, rather than to ſingle out thoſe expreſſions, which would convey clearly the idea which they have in view, and no more. Neither, indeed, is Preciſion the prevailing character of Mr. Addiſon's Style; although he is not ſo deficient in this reſpect as the other two authors.

Lord Shafteſbury's faults, in point of Preciſion, are much greater than Mr. Addiſon's; and the more unpardonable, becauſe he is a profeſſed philoſophical writer; who, as ſuch, ought, above all things, to have ſtudied Preciſion. His Style has both great beauties and great faults; and, on the whole, is by no means a ſafe model for imitation. Lord Shafteſbury was well acquainted with the power of words; thoſe which he employs are generally proper and well ſounding; he has great variety of them; and his arrangement, as ſhall be afterwards ſhown, is commonly beautiful. His defect, in Preciſion, is not owing ſo much to indiſtinct or confuſed ideas, as to perpetual affectation. He is fond, to exceſs, of the pomp and parade of Language; he is never ſatisfied with expreſſing any thing clearly and ſimply; he muſt always give it the dreſs of ſtate and majeſty. Hence perpetual circumlocutions, and many words and phraſes employed to deſcribe ſomewhat, that would have been deſcribed much better by one of them. If he has occaſion to mention

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any perſon or author, he very rarely mentions him by his proper name. In the treatiſe, entitled, Advice to an Author, he deſcants for two or three pages together upon Ariſtotle, without once naming him in any other way, than, the Maſter Critic, the Mighty Genius and Judge of Art, the Prince of Critics, the Grand Maſter of Art, and Conſummate Philologiſt. In the ſame way, the Grand Poetic Sire, the Philoſophical Patriarch, and his Diſciple of Noble Birth, and Lofty Genius, are the only names by which he condeſcends to diſtinguiſh Homer, Socrates, and Plato, in another paſſage of the ſame treatiſe. This method of diſtinguiſhing perſons is extremely affected; but it is not ſo contrary to Preciſion, as the frequent circumlocutions he employs for all moral ideas; attentive, on every occaſion, more to the pomp of Language, than to the clearneſs which he ought to have ſtudied as a philoſopher. The moral ſenſe, for inſtance, after he had once defined it, was a clear term; but, how vague becomes the idea, when, in the next page, he calls it, "That natural affection, and anticipating fan-"cy, which makes the ſenſe of right and wrong?" Self-examination, or reflection on our own conduct, is an idea conceived with eaſe; but when it is wrought into all the forms of, "A "man's dividing himſelf into two parties, becoming a ſelf-dial-"ogiſt, entering into partnerſhip with himſelf, forming the dual "number practically within himſelf;" we hardly know what to make of it. On ſome occaſions, he ſo adorns, or rather loads with words, the plaineſt and ſimpleſt propoſitions, as, if not to obſcure, at leaſt, to enfeeble them.

In the following paragraph, for example, of the Inquiry concerning Virtue, he means to ſhow, that, by every ill action we hurt our mind, as much as one who ſhould ſwallow poiſon, or give himſelf a wound, would hurt his body. Obſerve what a redundancy of words he pours forth: "Now, if the fabric of "the mind or temper appeared to us, ſuch as it really is; if we "ſaw it impoſſible to remove hence any one good or orderly af-"fection, or to introduce any ill or diſorderly one, without drawing on, in ſome degree, that diſſolute ſtate which, at its height, is confeſſed to be ſo miſerable; it would then, un-"doubtedly, be confeſſed, that ſince no ill, immoral, or unjuſt

"action, can be committed, without either a new inroad and "breach on the temper and paſſions, or a further advancing of "that execution already done: whoever did ill, or acted in "prejudice of his integrity, good-nature, or worth, would of "neceſſity, act with greater cruelty towards himſelf, than he "who ſcrupled not to ſwallow what was poiſonous, or who, "with his own hands, ſhould voluntarily mangle or wound his "outward form or conſtitution, natural limbs or body."* Here, to commit a bad action, is, firſt, "To remove a good and or-"derly affection, and to introduce an ill or diſorderly one;" next, it is, "To commit an action that is ill, immoral, and un-"juſt;" and in the next line, it is, "To do ill, or to act in prej-"udice of integrity, good-nature, and worth;" nay, ſo very ſimple a thing as a man's wounding himſelf, is, "To mangle, "or wound, his outward form and conſtitution, his natural "limbs or body." Such ſuperfluity of words is diſguſtful to every reader of correct taſte; and ſerves no purpoſe but to embarraſs and perplex the ſenſe. This ſort of Style is elegantly deſcribed by Quintilian, "Eſt in quibuſdam turba inanium "verborum, qui dum communem loquendi morem reformidant, "ducti ſpecie nitoris, circumeunt omnia copioſa loquacitate quæ "dicere volunt.† Lib. vii. cap. 2.

(The great ſource of a looſe Style, in oppoſition to Preciſion, is the injudicious uſe of thoſe words termed ſynonimous.) They are called ſynonimous, becauſe they agree in expreſſing one principal idea; but, for the moſt part, if not always, they expreſs it with ſome diverſity in the circumſtances. They are varied by ſome acceſſary idea which every word introduces, and which forms the diſtinction between them. (Hardly, in any Language, are there two words that convey preciſely the ſame idea; a perſon thoroughly converſant in the propriety of the Language, will always be able to obſerve ſomething that diſtinguiſhes them.) As they are like different ſhades of the ſame colour, an accurate writer can employ them to great advantage, by

* Characteriſt. Vol. II. p. 85.

† "A crowd of unmeaning words is brought together, by ſome authors, who, "afraid of expreſſing themſelves after a common and ordinary manner, and al-"lured by an appearance of ſplendour, ſurround every thing which they mean "to ſay with a certain copious loquacity."

by using them, so as to heighten and to finish the picture which he gives us. He supplies by one, what was wanting in the other, to the force, or to the lustre of the image which he means to exhibit. But, in order to this end, he must be extremely attentive to the choice which he makes of them. For the bulk of writers are very apt to confound them with each other; and to employ them carelessly, merely for the sake of filling up a period, or of rounding and diversifying the Language, as if their signification were exactly the same, while, in truth, it is not. Hence a certain mist and indistinctness is unwarily thrown over Style.

In the Latin Language, there are no two words we would more readily take to be synonimous, than *amare* and *diligere*. Cicero, however, has shewn us, that there is a very clear distinction betwixt them. "Quid ergo," says he, in one of his epistles, "tibi commendem eum quem tu ipse diligis? Sed tamen "ut scires eum non a me *diligi* solum, verum etiam *amari*, ob eam "rem tibi hæc scribo."* In the same manner *tutus* and *securus*, are words which we would readily confound; yet their meaning is different. *Tutus*, signifies out of danger; *securus*, free from the dread of it. Seneca has elegantly marked this distinction; "Tuta scelera esse possunt, secura non possunt."† In our own Language, very many instances might be given of a difference in meaning among words reputed synonimous; and, as the subject is of importance, I shall now point out some of these. The instances which I am to give, may themselves be of use; and they will serve to shew the necessity of attending, with care and strictness, to the exact import of words, if ever we would write with Propriety or Precision.

Austerity, Severity, Rigour. Austerity, relates to the manner of living; Severity, of thinking; Rigour, of punishing. To Austerity, is opposed Effeminacy; to Severity, Relaxation; to Rigour, Clemency. A Hermit, is austere in his life; a casuist, severe in his application of religion or law; a Judge, rigorous in his sentences.

Custom, Habit. Custom, respects the action; Habit, the actor. By Custom, we mean the frequent repetition of the same act; by Habit, the effect which that repetition produces on the mind or

* Ad Famil. l. 13. ep. 47. † Epis. 97.

or body. By the Cuſtom of walking often in the ſtreets, one acquires a Habit of idleneſs.

(*Surpriſed, aſtoniſhed, amazed, confounded.* I am ſurpriſed, with what is new or unexpected; I am aſtoniſhed, at what is vaſt or great; I am amazed, with what is incomprehenſible; I am confounded, by what is ſhocking or terrible.)

Deſiſt, renounce, quit, leave off. Each of theſe words imply ſome purſuit or object relinquiſhed; but from different motives. We deſiſt, from the difficulty of accompliſhing. We renounce, on account of the diſagreeableneſs of the object, or purſuit. We quit, for the ſake of ſome other thing which intereſts us more; and we leave off, becauſe we are weary of the deſign. A politician deſiſts from his deſigns, when he finds they are impracticable; he renounces the court, becauſe he has been affronted by it; he quits ambition for ſtudy or retirement; and leaves off his attendance on the great, as he becomes old and weary of it.

(*Pride, Vanity.* Pride, makes us eſteem ourſelves; Vanity, makes us deſire the eſteem of others.) It is juſt to ſay, as Dean Swift has done, that a man is too proud to be vain.

(*Haughtineſs, Diſdain.* Haughtineſs, is founded on the high opinion we entertain of ourſelves; Diſdain, on the low opinion we have of others.)

To diſtinguiſh, to ſeparate. We diſtinguiſh, what we want not to confound with another thing; we ſeparate, what we want to remove from it. Objects are diſtinguiſhed from one another, by their qualities. They are ſeparated, by the diſtance of time or place.

(*To weary, to fatigue.* The continuance of the ſame thing wearies us; labour fatigues us. I am weary with ſtanding; I am fatigued with walking.) A ſuitor wearies us by his perſeverance; fatigues us by his importunity.

(*To abhor, to deteſt.* To abhor, imports, ſimply, ſtrong diſlike; to deteſt, imports alſo ſtrong diſapprobation. One abhors being in debt; he deteſts treachery.)

(*To invent, to diſcover.* We invent things that are new; we diſcover what was before hidden. Galileo invented the teleſcope; Harvey diſcovered the circulation of the blood.)

Only,

Only, alone. Only, imports that there is no other of the ſame kind; alone, imports being accompanied by no other. An only child, is one who has neither brother nor ſiſter; a child alone, is one who is left by itſelf. There is a difference, therefore, in preciſe Language, betwixt theſe two phraſes, "Virtue only makes us happy;" and, "Virtue alone makes "us happy." Virtue only makes us happy, imports, that nothing elſe can do it. Virtue alone makes us happy, imports, that virtue, by itſelf, or unaccompanied with other advantages, is ſufficient to do it.

Entire, Complete. A thing is entire, by wanting none of its parts; complete, by wanting none of the appendages that belong to it. A man may have an entire houſe to himſelf; and yet not have one complete apartment.

Tranquillity, Peace, Calm. Tranquillity, reſpects a ſituation free from trouble, conſidered in itſelf; Peace, the ſame ſituation with reſpect to any cauſes that might interrupt it; Calm, with regard to a diſturbed ſituation going before, or following it. A good man enjoys Tranquillity in himſelf; Peace, with others; and Calm, after the ſtorm.

A Difficulty, an Obſtacle. A Difficulty, embarraſſes; an Obſtacle, ſtops us. We remove the one; we ſurmount the other. Generally, the firſt, expreſſes ſomewhat ariſing from the nature and circumſtances of the affair; the ſecond, ſomewhat ariſing from a foreign cauſe. Philip found Difficulty in managing the Athenians from the nature of their diſpoſitions; but the eloquence of Demoſthenes was the greateſt Obſtacle to his deſigns.

Wiſdom, Prudence. Wiſdom, leads us to ſpeak and act what is moſt proper. Prudence, prevents our ſpeaking or acting improperly. A wiſe man, employs the moſt proper means for ſucceſs; a prudent man, the ſafeſt means for not being brought into danger.

Enough, Sufficient. Enough, relates to the quantity which one wiſhes to have of any thing. Sufficient, relates to the uſe that is to be made of it. Hence, Enough, generally imports a greater quantity than Sufficient does. The covetous man never has enough; although he has what is ſufficient for nature.

To avow, to acknowledge, to confeſs. Each of theſe words imports the affirmation of a fact, but in very different circumſtances. To avow, ſuppoſes the perſon to glory in it; to acknowledge, ſuppoſes a ſmall degree of faultineſs, which the acknowledgment compenſates; to confeſs, ſuppoſes a higher degree of crime. A patriot avows his oppoſition to a bad miniſter, and is applauded; a gentleman acknowledges his miſtake, and is forgiven; a priſoner confeſſes the crime he is accuſed of, and is puniſhed.

To remark, to obſerve. We remark, in the way of attention, in order to remember; we obſerve, in the way of examination, in order to judge. A traveller remarks the moſt ſtriking objects he ſees; a general obſerves all the motions of his enemy.

Equivocal, Ambiguous. An Equivocal Expreſſion is, one which has one ſenſe open, and deſigned to be underſtood; another ſenſe concealed, and underſtood only by the perſon who uſes it. An Ambiguous Expreſſion is, one which has apparently two ſenſes, and leaves us at a loſs which of them to give it. An Equivocal Expreſſion is uſed with an intention to deceive; an Ambiguous one, when it is uſed with deſign, is, with an intention not to give full information. An honeſt man will never employ an Equivocal Expreſſion; a confuſed man may often utter Ambiguous ones, without any deſign. I ſhall give only one inſtance more.

With, By. Both theſe particles expreſs the connexion between ſome inſtrument, or means of effecting an end, and the agent who employs it: but *with*, expreſſes a more cloſe and immediate connexion; *by*, a more remote one. We kill a man *with* a ſword; he dies *by* violence. The criminal is bound *with* ropes *by* the executioner. The proper diſtinction in the uſe of theſe particles, is elegantly marked in a paſſage of Dr. Roberſon's Hiſtory of Scotland. When one of the old Scottiſh kings was making an inquiry into the tenure *by* which his nobles held their lands, they ſtarted up, and drew their ſwords; "*By* theſe," ſaid they, "we acquired our lands, and "*with* theſe we will defend them." "*By* theſe we acquired "our lands;" ſignifies the more remote means of acquiſition by force and martial deeds; and, "*with* theſe we will defend "them;"

"them;" ſignifies the immediate direct inſtrument, the ſword, which they would employ in their defence.

(These are inſtances of words, in our Language, which, by careleſs writers, are apt to be employed as perfectly ſynonimous, and yet are not ſo. Their ſignifications approach, but are not preciſely the ſame. (The more the diſtinction in the meaning of ſuch words is weighed, and attended to, the more clearly and forcibly ſhall we ſpeak or write.*)

From all that has been ſaid on this head, it will now appear, that, in order to write or ſpeak with Preciſion, two things are eſpecially requiſite; one, that an author's own ideas be clear and diſtinct; and the other, that we have an exact and full comprehenſion of the force of thoſe words which he employs. Natural genius is here required; labour and attention ſtill more. Dean Swift is one of the authors, in our Language, moſt diſtinguiſhed for Preciſion of Style. In his writings, we ſeldom or never find vague expreſſions, and ſynonimous words, careleſsly thrown together. His meaning is always clear, and ſtrongly marked.

I had occaſion to obſerve before, that though all ſubjects of writing or diſcourſe demand Perſpicuity, yet all do not require the ſame degree of that exact Preciſion, which I have endeavoured to explain. It is, indeed, in every ſort of writing, a great beauty to have, at leaſt, ſome meaſure of Preciſion, in diſtinction from that looſe profuſion of words which imprints no clear idea on the reader's mind. But we muſt, at the ſame time, be on our guard, leſt too great a ſtudy of Preciſion, eſpecially in ſubjects where it is not ſtrictly requiſite, betray us into a dry and barren Style; leſt, from the deſire of pruning too cloſely, we retrench all copiouſneſs and ornament. Some degree

* In French, there is a very uſeful treatiſe on this ſubject, the Abbé Girard's *Synonymes Françoiſes*, in which he has made a large collection of ſuch arent Synonymes in the Language, and ſhown, with much accuracy, the erence in their ſignification. It were much to be wiſhed, that ſome ſuch k were undertaken for our tongue, and executed with equal taſte and gment. Nothing would contribute more to preciſe and elegant writing. the mean time, this French Treatiſe may be peruſed with conſiderable fit. It will accuſtom perſons to weigh, with attention, the force of words; n will ſuggeſt ſeveral diſtinctions betwixt ſynonimous terms in our own nguage, analogous to thoſe which he has pointed out in the French; and, cordingly, ſeveral of the inſtances above given were ſuggeſted by the work his author.

gree of this failing may, perhaps, be remarked in Dean Swift's ſerious works. Attentive only to exhibit his ideas clear and exact, reſting wholly on his ſenſe and diſtinctneſs, he appears to reject, diſdainfully, all embelliſhment, which, on ſome occaſions, may be thought to render his manner ſomewhat hard and dry. To unite together Copiouſneſs and Preciſion, to be flowing and graceful, and, at the ſame time, correct and exact in the choice of every word, is, no doubt, one of the higheſt and moſt difficult attainments in writing. Some kinds of compoſition may require more of Copiouſneſs and ornament; others, more of Preciſion and Accuracy; nay, in the ſame compoſition, the different parts of it may demand a proper variation of manner. But we muſt ſtudy never to ſacrifice, totally, any one of theſe qualities to the other; and, by a proper management, both of them may be made fully conſiſtent, if our own ideas be preciſe, and our knowledge and ſtock of words be, at the ſame time, extenſive.

LECTURE XI.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

HAVING begun to treat of Style, in the laſt Lecture I conſidered its fundamental quality, Perſpicuity. What I have ſaid of this, relates chiefly to the choice of words. From words I proceed to Sentences; and as, in all writing and diſcourſe, the proper compoſition and Structure of Sentences is of the higheſt importance, I ſhall treat of this fully. Though Perſpicuity be the general head under which I, at preſent, conſider Language, I ſhall not confine myſelf to this quality alone, in Sentences, but ſhall inquire alſo, what is requiſite for their Grace and Beauty: that I may bring together, under one view, all that ſeems neceſſary to be attended to in the conſtruction and arrangement of words in a Sentence.

It is not eaſy to give an exact definition of a Sentence, or Period, farther, than as it always implies ſome one complete propoſition or enunciation of thought. Ariſtotle's definition is, in the main, a good one: "Λεξις εχουσα αρχην και τελευτην καθ' "αυτην, και μεγεθος ευσυνοπτον:" "A form of Speech which hath "a beginning and an end within itſelf, and is of ſuch a length "as to be eaſily comprehended at once." This, however, admits of great latitude. For a Sentence, or Period, conſiſts always of component parts, which are called its members; and as theſe members may be either few or many, and may be connected in ſeveral different ways, the ſame thought, or mental propoſition, may often be either brought into one Sentence, or ſplit into two or three, without the material breach of any rule.

The firſt variety that occurs in the conſideration of Sentences, is, the diſtinction of long and ſhort ones. The preciſe length of Sentences, as to the number of words, or the number of members, which may enter into them, cannot be aſcertained

by any definite meaſure. Only, it is obvious, there may be an extreme on either ſide. Sentences, immoderately long, and conſiſting of too many members, always tranſgreſs ſome one or other of the rules which I ſhall mention ſoon, as neceſſary to be obſerved in every good Sentence. In diſcourſes that are to be ſpoken, regard muſt be had to the eaſineſs of pronunciation, which is not conſiſtent with too long periods. In compoſitions where pronunciation has no place, ſtill, however, by uſing long periods too frequently, an author overloads the reader's ear, and fatigues his attention. For long periods require, evidently, more attention than ſhort ones, in order to perceive clearly the connexion of the ſeveral parts, and to take in the whole at one view. At the ſame time, there may be an exceſs in too many ſhort Sentences alſo; by which the ſenſe is ſplit and broken, the connexion of thought weakened, and the memory burdened, by preſenting to it a long ſucceſſion of minute objects.

With regard to the length and conſtruction of Sentences, the French critics make a very juſt diſtinction of Style, into *Stile Périodique*, and *Style Coupé*. The *Style Périodique* is, where the Sentences are compoſed of ſeveral members linked together, and hanging upon one another; ſo that the ſenſe of the whole is not brought out till the cloſe. This is the moſt pompous, muſical, and oratorical manner of compoſing; as in the following ſentence of Sir William Temple: "If you look about you, "and conſider the lives of others as well as your own; if you "think how few are born with honour, and how many die "without name or children; how little beauty we ſee, and "how few friends we hear of; how many diſeaſes, and how "much poverty there is in the world; you will fall down up-"on your knees, and, inſtead of repining at one affliction, will "admire ſo many bleſſings which you have received from the "hand of God." (Letter to Lady Eſſex.) Cicero abounds with Sentences conſtructed after this manner.

The *Stile Coupé* is, where the ſenſe is formed into ſhort independent propoſitions, each complete within itſelf; as in the following of Mr. Pope: "I confeſs, it was want of conſidera-"tion that made me an author. I writ, becauſe it amuſed me. "I corrected, becauſe it was as pleaſant to me to correct as to "write.

"write. I publiſhed, becauſe, I was told, I might pleaſe ſuch "as it was a credit to pleaſe." (Preface to his works.) This is very much the French method of writing; and always ſuits gay and eaſy ſubjects. The *Stile Périodique*, gives an air of gravity and dignity to compoſition. The *Stile Coupé*, is more lively and ſtriking. According to the nature of the compoſition, therefore, and the general character it ought to bear, the one or other may be predominant. But, in almoſt every kind of compoſition, the great rule is to intermix them. For the ear tires of either of them when too long continued: whereas, by a proper mixture of long and ſhort periods, the ear is gratified, and a certain ſprightlineſs is joined with majeſty in our ſtyle. "Non ſemper," ſays Cicero (deſcribing very expreſſively, theſe two different kinds of Style, of which I have been ſpeaking) "non ſemper utendum eſt perpetuitate, & quaſi converſione "verborum; ſed ſæpe carpenda membris minutioribus oratio "eſt."*

This variety is of ſo great conſequence, that it muſt be ſtudied, not only in the ſucceſſion of long and ſhort Sentences, but in the Structure of our Sentences alſo. A train of Sentences, conſtructed in the ſame manner, and with the ſame number of members, whether long or ſhort, ſhould never be allowed to ſucceed one another. However muſical each of them may be, it has a better effect to introduce even a diſcord, than to cloy the ear with the repetition of ſimilar ſounds: For, nothing is ſo tireſome as perpetual uniformity. In this article of the conſtruction and diſtribution of his Sentences, Lord Shafteſbury has ſhown great art. In the laſt Lecture, I obſerved, that he is often guilty of ſacrificing preciſion of ſtyle to pomp of expreſſion; and that there runs through his whole manner, a ſtiffneſs and affectation, which render him very unfit to be conſidered as a general model. But, as his ear was fine, and as he was extremely attentive to every thing that is elegant, he has ſtudied the proper intermixture of long and ſhort Sentences, with variety and harmony in their ſtructure, more than any other Engliſh author; and for this part of compoſition he deſerves attention.

From

* "It is not proper always to employ a continued train, and a ſort of reg-"ular compaſs of phraſes; but ſtyle ought to be often broken down into "ſmaller members."

From these general observations, let us now descend to a more particular consideration of the qualities that are required to make a Sentence perfect. (So much depends upon the proper construction of Sentences, that, in every sort of composition, we cannot be too strict in our attentions to it. For, be the subject what it will, if the Sentences be constructed in a clumsy, perplexed or feeble manner, it is impossible that a work, composed of such Sentences, can be read with pleasure, or even with profit. Whereas, by giving attention to the rules which relate to this part of style, we acquire the habit of expressing ourselves with Perspicuity and Elegance; and, if a disorder chance to arise in some of our Sentences, we immediately see where it lies, and are able to rectify it.*)

(The properties most essential to a perfect Sentence, seem to me, the four following: 1. Clearness and Precision. 2. Unity. 3. Strength. 4. Harmony.) Each of these I shall illustrate separately, and at some length.

The first is, Clearness and Precision. The least failure here, the least degree of ambiguity, which leaves the mind in any sort of suspense as to the meaning, ought to be avoided with the greatest care; nor is it so easy a matter to keep always clear of this, as one might, at first, imagine. (Ambiguity arises from two causes: either from a wrong choice of words, or a wrong collocation of them. Of the choice of words, as far as regards Perspicuity, I treated fully in the last Lecture. Of the collocation of them, I am now to treat.) The first thing to be studied here is, to observe exactly the rules of grammar, as far as these can guide us. But as the grammar of our Language is not extensive, there may often be an ambiguous collocation of words, where there is no transgression of any grammatical rule. The relations which the words, or members of a period,

* On the Structure of Sentences, the ancients appear to have bestowed a great deal of attention and care. The Treatise of Demetrius Phalereus περι Ερμηνειας, abounds with observations upon the choice and collocation of words carried to such a degree of nicety as would frequently seem to us minute. The Treatise of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, περι συνθεσεως ονοματων, is more masterly; but is chiefly confined to the musical structure of periods; a subject, for which the Greek Language afforded much more assistance to their writers, than our Tongue admits. On the arrangement of words, in English Sentences, the xviiith chapter of Lord Kaim's Elements of Criticism ought to be consulted; and also, the 2d Volume of Dr. Campbell's Philosophy of Rhetoric.

a period, bear to one another, cannot be pointed out in English, as in the Greek or Latin, by means of termination; it is ascertained only by the position in which they ſtand. (Hence a capital rule in the arrangement of Sentences is, that the words or members moſt nearly related, ſhould be placed in the Sentence, as near to each other as poſſible; ſo as to make their mutual relation clearly appear. This is a rule not always obſerved, even by good writers, as ſtrictly as it ought to be. It will be neceſſary to produce ſome inſtances, which will both ſhow the importance of this rule, and make the application of it to be underſtood.)

Firſt, In the poſition of adverbs, which are uſed to qualify the ſignification of ſomething which either precedes or follows them, there is often a good deal of nicety. "By greatneſs," (ſays Mr. Addiſon, in the Spectator, No. 412.) "I do "not only mean the bulk of any ſingle object, but the largeneſs "of a whole view." Here the place of the adverb *only*, renders it a limitation of the following word, mean. "I do not only "mean." The queſtion may then be put, What does he more than mean? Had he placed it after *bulk*, ſtill it would have been wrong. "I do not mean the *bulk only* of any ſingle "object." For we might then aſk, What does he mean more than the bulk? Is it the colour? Or any other property? Its proper place, undoubtedly, is, after the word *object*. "By "greatneſs, I do not mean the bulk of any ſingle object only;" for then, when we put the queſtion, What more does he mean than the bulk of a ſingle object? The anſwer comes out exactly as the author intends, and gives it; "The largeneſs of a "whole view." "Theiſm," ſays Lord Shafteſbury, "can only "be oppoſed to polytheiſm, or atheiſm." Does he mean that theiſm is capable of nothing elſe, except being oppoſed to polytheiſm or atheiſm? This is what his words literally import, through the wrong collocation of *only*. He ſhould have ſaid, "Theiſm can be oppoſed only to polytheiſm or atheiſm.") In like manner, Dean Swift, (Project for the advancement of Religion) "The Romans underſtood liberty, at leaſt, as well "as we." Theſe words are capable of two different ſenſes, according as the emphaſis, in reading them, is laid upon *liberty*, or upon *at leaſt*. In the firſt caſe, they will ſignify, that whatever

ever other things we may underſtand better than the Romans, *liberty*, at leaſt, was one thing, which they underſtood as well as we. In the ſecond caſe, they will import, that liberty was underſtood, *at leaſt* as well by them as by us; meaning that by them it was better underſtood. If this laſt, as I make no doubt, was Dean Swift's own meaning, the ambiguity would have been avoided, and the ſenſe rendered independent of the manner of pronouncing, by arranging the words thus: "The Romans un-"derſtood liberty as well, at leaſt, as we." The fact is, with reſpect to ſuch adverbs, as, *only*, *wholly*, *at leaſt*, and the reſt of that tribe, that in common diſcourſe, the tone and emphaſis we uſe in pronouncing them, generally ſerves to ſhow their reference, and to make the meaning clear; and hence, we acquire a habit of throwing them in looſely in the courſe of a period. But, in writing, where a man ſpeaks to the eye, and not to the ear, he ought to be more accurate; and ſo to connect thoſe adverbs with the words which they qualify, as to put his meaning out of doubt upon the firſt inſpection.

Secondly, When a circumſtance is interpoſed in the middle of a Sentence, it ſometimes requires attention how to place it, ſo as to diveſt it of all ambiguity. For inſtance: "Are theſe deſigns," (ſays Lord Bolingbroke, Differ. on Parties, Dedicat.) "Are theſe deſigns which any man, who is born a Briton, in "any circumſtances, in any ſituation, ought to be aſhamed or "afraid to avow?" Here we are left at a loſs, whether theſe words, "*in any circumſtances, in any ſituation*," are connected with, "a man born in Britain, in any circumſtances, or ſituation," or with that man's "avowing his deſigns, in any circumſtances, "or ſituation, into which he may be brought?" If the latter, as ſeems moſt probable, was intended to be the meaning, the arrangement ought to have been conducted thus: "Are theſe de-"ſigns, which any man who is born a Briton, ought to be "aſhamed or afraid, in any circumſtances, in any ſituation, to avow?" But,

Thirdly, Still more attention is required to the proper diſpoſition of the relative pronouns, *who*, *which*, *what*, *whoſe*, and of all thoſe particles which expreſs the connexion of the parts of Speech with one another. As all reaſoning depends upon this connexion, we cannot be too accurate and preciſe here. A

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ſmall error may overcloud the meaning of the whole Sentence; and even, where the meaning is intelligible, yet, where theſe relative particles are out of their proper place, we always find ſomething awkward and diſjointed in the Structure of the Sentence. Thus, in the Spectator, (No. 54.) "This kind of wit," ſays Mr. Addiſon, "was very much in vogue among our coun-"trymen, about an age or two ago, who did not practiſe it for "any oblique reaſon, but purely for the ſake of being witty." We are at no loſs about the meaning here; but the conſtruction would evidently be mended by diſpoſing of the circumſtance, "about an age or two ago," in ſuch a manner as not to ſeparate the relative *who*, from its antecedent *our countrymen*; in this way: "About an age or two ago, this kind of wit was "very much in vogue among our countrymen, who did not "practiſe it for any oblique reaſon, but purely for the ſake of "being witty." Spectator, No. 412. "We no where meet "with a more glorious and pleaſing ſhow in nature, than what "appears in the heavens at the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, "*which* is wholly made up of thoſe different ſtains of light, "that ſhow themſelves in clouds of a different ſituation." *Which* is here deſigned to connect with the word *ſhow*, as its antecedent; but it ſtands ſo wide from it, that without a careful attention to the ſenſe, we would be naturally led, by the rules of ſyntax, to refer it to the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, or to the ſun itſelf; and, hence, an indiſtinctneſs is thrown over the whole Sentence. The following paſſage in Biſhop Sherlock's Sermons (Vol. II. Serm. 15.) is ſtill more cenſurable: "It is "folly to pretend to arm ourſelves againſt the accidents of life, "by heaping up treaſures, which nothing can protect us againſt, "but the good providence of our heavenly Father." *Which*, always refers grammatically to the immediately preceding ſubſtantive, which here is, "treaſures;" and this would make nonſenſe of the whole period. Every one feels this impropriety. The Sentence ought to have ſtood thus: "It is folly to pretend, "by heaping up treaſures, to arm ourſelves againſt the accidents "of life, which nothing can protect us againſt but the good "providence of our heavenly Father."

Of the like nature is the following inaccuracy of Dean Swift's. He is recommending to young clergyman, to write their ſermons fully

fully and distinctly. "Many," says he, "act so directly contrary "to this method, that, from a habit of saving time and paper, "which they acquired at the university, they write in so dimin- "utive a manner, that they can hardly read what they have "written." He certainly does not mean, that they had acquired time and paper at the university, but they had acquired this habit there; and therefore his words ought to have run thus: "From a habit, which they have acquired at the university, of sav- "ing time and paper, they write in so diminutive a manner." In another passage, the same author has left his meaning altogether uncertain, by misplacing a relative. It is in the conclusion of his letter to a member of parliament, concerning the sacramental test: "Thus I have fairly given you, Sir, my own opinion, as "well as that of a great majority of both houses here, relating "to this weighty affair; upon which I am confident you may "securely reckon." Now I ask, What it is he would have his correspondent to reckon upon, securely? The natural construction leads to these words, "this weighty affair." But, as it would be difficult to make any sense of this, it is more probable he meant that the majority of both houses might be securely reckoned upon; though certainly this meaning, as the words are arranged, is obscurely expressed. The sentence would be amended by arranging it thus: "Thus, Sir, I have given you my "own opinion, relating to this weighty affair, as well as that "of a great majority of both houses here; upon which I am "confident you may securely reckon."

Several other instances might be given; but I reckon those which I have produced sufficient to make the rule understood; that, in the construction of Sentences, one of the first things to be attended to, is the marshalling of the words in such order as shall most clearly mark the relation of the several parts of the sentence to one another; particularly, that adverbs shall always be made to adhere closely to the words which they are intended to qualify; that, where a circumstance is thrown in, it shall never hang loose in the midst of a period, but be determined by its place to one or other member of it; and that every relative word which is used, shall instantly present its antecedent to the mind of the reader, without the least obscurity. I have mentioned these three cases, because I think they are the most frequent occasions of ambiguity creeping into Sentences.

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With regard to relatives, I muſt farther obſerve, that obſcurity often ariſes from the too frequent repetition of them, particularly of the pronouns *who*, and *they*, and *them*, and *theirs*, when we have occaſion to refer to different perſons; as, in the following Sentence of Archbiſhop Tillotſon: (vol. I. ſerm. 42.) "Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others; "and think that their reputation obſcures them, and their "commendable qualities ſtand in their light; and therefore "they do what they can to caſt a cloud over them, that the "bright ſhining of their virtues may not obſcure them." This is altogether careleſs writing. It renders ſtyle often obſcure, always embarraſſed and inelegant. When we find theſe perſonal pronouns crowding too faſt upon us, we have often no method left, but to throw the whole ſentence into ſome other form, which may avoid thoſe frequent references to perſons who have before been mentioned.

All languages are liable to ambiguities. Quintilian gives us ſome inſtances in the Latin, ariſing from faulty arrangement. A man, he tells us, ordered, by his will, to have erected for him, after his death, "Statuam auream haſtam tenentem;" upon which aroſe a diſpute at law, whether the whole ſtatue, or the ſpear only, was to be of gold? The ſame author obſerves, very properly, that a ſentence is always faulty, when the collocation of the words is ambiguous, though the ſenſe can be gathered. If any one ſhould ſay, "Chremetem audivi "percuſſiſſe Demeam," this is ambiguous both in ſenſe and ſtructure, whether Chremes or Demea gave the blow. But if this expreſſion were uſed, "Se vidiſſe hominem librum ſcriben-"tem," although the meaning be clear, yet Quintilian inſiſts that the arrangement is wrong. "Nam," ſays he, "etiamſi librum ab homine ſcribi pateat, non certè hominem a "libro, malè tamen compoſuerat, feceratque ambiguum quan-"tum in ipſo fuit." Indeed, to have the relation of every word and member of a Sentence marked in the moſt proper and diſtinct manner, gives not clearneſs only, but grace and beauty to a Sentence, making the mind paſs ſmoothly and agreeably along all the parts of it.

I proceed now to the ſecond quality of a well-arranged ſentence, which I termed its Unity. This is a capital property.

[illegible]on, of whatever kind, some degree of Unity [illegible] order to render it beautiful. There must be al- [illegible] connecting principle between the parts. Some one [illegible] must reign and be predominant. This, as I shall here- [illegible] shew, holds in history, in epic and dramatic poetry, and in all orations. But most of all, in a single Sentence, is required the strictest unity. For the very nature of a Sentence implies one proposition to be expressed. It may consist of parts, indeed: but these parts must be so closely bound together, as to make the impression upon the mind, of one object, not of many. Now, in order to preserve this Unity of a Sentence, the following rules must be observed:

In the first place, during the course of the Sentence, the scene should be changed as little as possible. We should not be hurried by sudden transitions from person to person, nor from subject to subject. There is commonly, in every Sentence, some person or thing, which is the governing word. This should be continued so, if possible, from the beginning to the end of it. Should I express myself thus: "After we came to "anchor, they put me on shore, where I was welcomed by all "my friends, who received me with the greatest kindness." In this Sentence, though the objects contained in it have a sufficient connexion with each other, yet, by this manner of representing them, by shifting so often both the place and the person, *we*, and *they*, and *I*, and *who*, they appear in such a disunited view, that the sense of connexion is almost lost. The Sentence is restored to its proper Unity, by turning it after the following manner: "Having came to an anchor, I was put on "shore, where I was welcomed by all my friends, and received with the greatest kindness." Writers who transgress this rule, for the most part transgress, at the same time,

A second rule; never to crowd into one Sentence, things which have so little connexion, that they could bear to be divided into two or three Sentences. The violation of this rule never fails to hurt and displease a reader. Its effect, indeed, is so bad, that, of the two, it is the safer extreme, to err rather by too many short Sentences, than by one that is overloaded and embarrassed. Examples abound in authors. I shall produce some, to justify what I now say. "Archbishop Tillotson," says

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an author of the history of England, "died in this year. He "was exceedingly beloved both by king William and queen "Mary, who nominated Dr. Tennison, bishop of Lincoln, to "succeed him." Who would expect the latter part of this sentence to follow, in consequence of the former? "He was "exceedingly beloved by both king and queen," is the proposition of the sentence: we look for some proof of this, or at least something related to it, to follow; when we are on a sudden carried off to a new proposition, "who nominated Dr. "Tennison, to succeed him." The following is from Middleton's Life of Cicero: "In this uneasy state, both of his public "and private life, Cicero was oppressed by a new and cruel "affliction, the death of his beloved daughter Tullia; which "happened soon after her divorce from Dolabella; whose "manners and humours were entirely disagreeable to her." The principal object in this Sentence is, the death of Tullia, which was the cause of her father's affliction; the date of it, as happening soon after her divorce from Dollabella, may enter into the Sentence with propriety; but the subjunction of Dolabella's character is foreign to the main object; and breaks the unity and compactness of the Sentence totally, by setting a new picture before the reader. The following Sentence, from a translation of Plutarch, is still worse: "Their march," says the Author, speaking of the Greeks under Alexander, "their march "was through an uncultivated country, whose savage inhabi- "ants fared hardly, having no other riches than a breed of lean "sheep, whose flesh was rank and unsavoury, by reason of their "continual feeding upon sea-fish." Here the scene is changed upon us again and again. The march of the Greeks, the description of the inhabitants through whose country they travelled, the account of their sheep, and the cause of their sheep being ill-tasted food, form a jumble of objects, slightly related to each other, which the reader cannot, without much difficulty, comprehend under one view.

These examples have been taken from Sentences of no great length, yet over-crowded. Authors who deal in long Sentences, are very apt to be faulty in this article. One need only open Lord Clarendon's History, to find examples every where. The long, involved, and intricate Sentences of that Author, are the greatest blemish of his composition; though, in other respects,

reſpects, as a hiſtorian, he has conſiderable merit. In later, and more correct writers than Lord Clarendon, we find a period ſometimes running out ſo far, and comprehending ſo many particulars, as to be more properly a diſcourſe than a Sentence. Take, for an inſtance, the following from Sir William Temple, in his Eſſay upon Poetry: "The uſual acceptation "takes profit and pleaſure for two different things; and not "only calls the followers or votaries of them by the ſeveral "names of buſy and idle men; but diſtinguiſhes the faculties "of the mind, that are converſant about them, calling the op- "erations of the firſt, wiſdom; and of the other, wit; which "is a Saxon word, uſed to expreſs what the Spaniards and "Italians call *Ingenio*, and the French, *Eſprit*, both from the "Latin; though I think wit more particularly ſignifies that of "poetry, as may occur in remarks on the Runic Language." When one arrives at the end of ſuch a puzzled ſentence, he is ſurpriſed to find himſelf got to ſo great a diſtance from the object with which he at firſt ſet out.

Lord Shafteſbury, often betrayed into faults by his love of magnificence, ſhall afford us the next example. It is in his Rhapſody, where he is deſcribing the cold regions: "At length," ſays he, "the ſun approaching, melts the ſnow, ſets longing "men at liberty, and affords them means and time to make pro- "viſion againſt the next return of cold." This firſt Sentence is correct enough; but he goes on: "It breaks the icy fetters of "the main, where vaſt ſea-monſters pierce through floating iſl- "ands, with arms which can withſtand the cryſtal rock; whilſt "others, who of themſelves ſeem great as iſlands, are by their "bulk alone armed againſt all but man, whoſe ſuperiority over "creatures of ſuch ſtupendous ſize and force, ſhould make him "mindful of his privilege of reaſon, and force him humbly to "adore the great Compoſer of theſe wondrous frames, and the "Author of his own ſuperior wiſdom." Nothing can be more unhappy or embarraſſed than this Sentence; the worſe too, as it is intended to be deſcriptive, where every thing ſhould be clear. It forms no diſtinct image whatever. The *It*, at the beginning, is ambiguous, whether it mean the ſun or the cold. The object is changed three times in the Sentence; beginning with the ſun, which breaks the icy fetters of the main; then the ſea-

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monſters become the principal perſonages; and laſtly, by a very unexpected tranſition, man is brought into view, and receives a long and ſerious admonition before the Sentence cloſes. I do not at preſent inſiſt on the impropriety of ſuch expreſſions as, *God's being the Compoſer of frames*; and the ſea-monſters having *arms that withſtand rocks*. Shafteſbury's ſtrength lay in reaſoning and ſentiment, more than in deſcription; however much his deſcriptions have been ſometimes admired.

I ſhall only give one inſtance more on this head, from Dean Swift; in his propoſal, too, for correcting the Engliſh Language: where, in place of a Sentence, he has given a looſe diſſertation upon ſeveral ſubjects. Speaking of the progreſs of our Language, after the time of Cromwell: "To this ſucceeded," ſays he, "that licentiouſneſs which entered with the reſtoration, and, from infecting our religion and morals, fell to corrupt our Language; which laſt was not like to be much improved by thoſe, who at that time made up the court of king Charles the ſecond; either ſuch as had followed him in his baniſhment, or who had been altogether converſant in the dialect of theſe fanatic times; or young men, who had been educated in the ſame country: ſo that the court, which uſed to be the ſtandard of correctneſs and propriety of ſpeech, was then, and I think has ever ſince continued, the worſt ſchool in England for that accompliſhment; and ſo will remain, till better care be taken in the education of our nobility, that they may ſet out into the world with ſome foundation of literature, in order to qualify them for patterns of politeneſs." How many different facts, reaſonings, and obſervations, are here preſented to the mind at once! and yet ſo linked together by the Author, that they all make parts of a Sentence, which admits of no greater diviſion in pointing, than a ſemicolon between any of its members? Having mentioned pointing, I ſhall here take notice, that it is in vain to propoſe, by arbitrary punctuation, to amend the defects of a Sentence, to correct its ambiguity, or to prevent its confuſion. For commas, colons, and points, do not make the proper diviſions of thought; but only ſerve to mark thoſe which ariſe from the tenor of the Author's expreſſion: and, therefore, they are proper or not, juſt according as they correſpond

pond to the natural divisions of the sense. When they are inserted in wrong places, they deserve, and will meet with, no regard.

I proceed to a third rule, for preserving the Unity of Sentences; which is, to keep clear of all parentheses in the middle of them. On some occasions, these may have a spirited appearance; as prompted by a certain vivacity of thought, which can glance happily aside, as it is going along. But, for the most part, their effect is extremely bad; being a sort of wheels within wheels; Sentences in the midst of Sentences; the perplexed method of disposing of some thought, which a writer wants art to introduce in its proper place. It were needless to give many instances, as they occur so often among incorrect writers. I shall produce one from Lord Bolingbroke; the rapidity of whose genius, and manner of writing, betrays him frequently into inaccuracies of this sort. It is in the Introduction to his Idea of a Patriot King, where he writes thus: "It "seems to me, that, in order to maintain the system of the "world, at a certain point, far below that of ideal perfection, "(for we are made capable of conceiving what we are incapable of attaining) but, however, sufficient, upon the whole, to "constitute a state easy and happy, or at the worst, tolerable; "I say, it seems to me, that the Author of Nature has thought "fit to mingle, from time to time, among the societies of men, "a few, and but a few, of those on whom he is graciously "pleased to bestow a larger portion of the Etherial Spirit, than "is given, in the ordinary course of his government, to the "sons of men." A very bad Sentence this; into which, by the help of a Parenthesis, and other interjected circumstances, his Lordship had contrived to thrust so many things, that he is forced to begin the construction again with the phrase, *I say*; which, whenever it occurs, may be always assumed as a sure mark of a clumsy ill-constructed Sentence; excusable in speaking, where the greatest accuracy is not expected, but in polished writing, unpardonable.

I shall add only one rule more for the Unity of a Sentence, which is, to bring it always to a full and perfect close. Every thing that is one, should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. I need not take notice, that an unfinished Sentence is

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no Sentence at all, according to any grammatical rule. But very often we meet with Sentences that are, ſo to ſpeak, more than finiſhed. When we have arrived at what we expected was to be the concluſion, when we have come to the word on which the mind is naturally led, by what went before, to reſt; unexpectedly, ſome circumſtance pops out, which ought to have been omitted, or to have been diſpoſed of elſewhere; but which is left lagging behind, like a tail adjected to the Sentence; ſomewhat that, as Mr. Pope deſcribes the Alexandrine line,

"Like a wounded ſnake, drags it ſlow length along."

All theſe adjections to the proper cloſe, diſfigure a Sentence extremely. They give it a lame, ungraceful air, and, in particular, they break its Unity. Dean Swift, for inſtance, in his Letter to a young Clergyman, ſpeaking of Cicero's writings, expreſſes himſelf thus: "With theſe writings, young divines "are more converſant, than with thoſe of Demoſthenes, who, "by many degrees, excelled the other; at leaſt, as an orator." Here the natural cloſe of the Sentence is at theſe words, "excelled the other." Theſe words conclude the propoſition; we look for no more; and the circumſtance added, "at leaſt, as an orator," comes in with a very halting pace. How much more compact would the Sentence have been, if turned thus: "With theſe writings, young divines are more converſant, "than with thoſe of Demoſthenes, who, by many degrees, as "an orator at leaſt, excelled the other." In the following Sentence, from Sir William Temple, the adjection to the Sentence is altogether foreign to it. Speaking of Burnet's Theory of the Earth, and Fontenelle's Plurality of Worlds, "The firſt," ſays he, "could not end his learned treatiſe, "without a panegyric of modern learning, in compariſon of the "ancient; and the other, falls ſo groſsly into the cenſure of "the old poetry, and preference of the new, that I could not "read either of theſe ſtrains without ſome indignation; which "no quality among men is ſo apt to raiſe in me as ſelf-ſuffi-"ciency." The word "indignation," concluded the Sentence; the laſt member, "which no quality among men is ſo apt to "raiſe in me as ſelf-ſufficiency," is a propoſition altogether new, added after the proper cloſe.

LECTURE

LECTURE XII.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES.

HAVING treated of Perſpicuity and Unity, as neceſſary to be ſtudied in the Structure of Sentences, I proceed to the third quality of a correct Sentence, which I termed Strength. By this, I mean, ſuch a diſpoſition of the ſeveral words and members, as ſhall bring out the ſenſe to the beſt advantage; as ſhall render the impreſſion, which the period is deſigned to make, moſt full and complete; and give every word, and every member, its due weight and force. The two former qualities of Perſpicuity and Unity, are, no doubt, abſolutely neceſſary to the production of this effect; but more is ſtill requiſite. For a Sentence may be clear enough; it may alſo be compact enough, in all its parts, or have the requiſite unity; and yet, by ſome unfavourable circumſtance in the Structure, it may fail in that ſtrength or livelineſs of impreſſion, which a more happy arrangement would have produced.

The firſt rule which I ſhall give, for promoting the Strength of a Sentence is, to prune it of all redundant words. Theſe may, ſometimes, be conſiſtent with a conſiderable degree both of Clearneſs and Unity; but they are always enfeebling. They make the Sentence move along tardy and encumbered;

> Eſt brevitate opus, ut currat ſententia, neu ſe
> Impediat verbis, laſſas onerantibus aures.*

It is a general maxim, that any words, which do not add ſome importance to the meaning of a ſentence, always ſpoil it. They cannot be ſuperfluous, without being hurtful. "Obſtat," ſays Quintilian, "quicquid non adjuvat." All that can be eaſily ſupplied in the mind, is better left out in the expreſſion. Thus: "Content with deſerving a triumph, he refuſed the honour of it,"

* "Conciſe your diction, let your ſenſe be clear,
"Nor, with a weight of words, fatigue the ear." FRANCIS.

it," is better Language than to ſay, "Being content with de-"ſerving a triumph, he refuſed the honour of it." I conſider it, therefore, as one of the moſt uſeful exerciſes of correction, upon reviewing what we have written or compoſed, to contract that round-about method of expreſſion, and to lop off thoſe uſeleſs excreſcences which are commonly found in a firſt draught. Here a ſevere eye ſhould be employed; and we ſhall always find our Sentences acquire more vigour and energy when thus retrenched: provided always, that we run not into the extreme of pruning ſo very cloſe, as to give a hardneſs and dryneſs to ſtyle. For here, as in all other things, there is a due medium. Some regard, though not the principal, muſt be had to fulneſs and ſwelling of ſound. Some leaves muſt be left to ſurround and ſhelter the fruit.

As Sentences ſhould be cleared of redundant words, ſo alſo of redundant members. As every word ought to preſent a new idea, ſo every member ought to contain a new thought. Oppoſed to this, ſtands the fault we ſometimes meet with, of the laſt member of a period, being no other than the echo of the former, or the repetition of it in ſomewhat a different form. For example; ſpeaking of Beauty, "The very firſt diſcovery "of it," ſays Mr. Addiſon, "ſtrikes the mind with inward joy, "and ſpreads delight through all its faculties." (No. 412.) And elſewhere, "It is impoſſible for us to behold the divine "works with coldneſs or indifference, or to ſurvey ſo many "beauties, without a ſecret ſatisfaction and complacency." (No. 413.) In both theſe inſtances, little or nothing is added by the ſecond member of the Sentence to what was already expreſſed in the firſt: and though the free and flowing manner of ſuch an author as Mr. Addiſon, and the graceful harmony of his periods, may palliate ſuch negligences; yet, in general, it holds, that ſtyle, freed from this prolixity, appears both more ſtrong, and more beautiful. The attention becomes remiſs, the mind falls into inaction, when words are multiplied without a correſponding multiplication of ideas.

After removing ſuperfluities, the ſecond direction I give, for promoting the Strength of a Sentence, is, to attend particularly to the uſe of copulatives, relatives, and all the particles employed for tranſition and connexion. Theſe little words, *but*,

and, which, whose, where, &c. are frequently the most important words of any; they are the joints or hinges upon which all Sentences turn, and of course, much, both of their gracefulness and Strength, must depend upon such particles. The varieties in using them are, indeed, so infinite, that no particular system of rules, respecting them, can be given. Attention to the practice of the most accurate writers, joined with frequent trials of the different effects, produced by a different usage of those particles, must here direct us.* Some observations, I shall mention, which have occurred to me as useful, without pretending to exhaust the subject.

What is called splitting of particles, or separating a preposition from the noun which it governs, is always to be avoided. As if I should say, "Though virtue borrows no assistance "from, yet it may often be accompanied by, the advantages "of fortune." In such instances, we feel a sort of pain, from the revulsion, or violent separation of two things, which, by their nature, should be closely united. We are put to a stand in thought; being obliged to rest for a little on the preposition by itself, which, at the same time, carries no significancy, till it is joined to its proper substantive noun.

Some writers needlessly multiply demonstrative and relative particles, by the frequent use of such phraseology as this: "There is nothing which disgusts us sooner than the empty "pomp of Language." In introducing a subject, or laying down a proposition, to which we demand particular attention, this sort of style is very proper; but, in the ordinary current of discourse, it is better to express ourselves more simply and shortly: "Nothing disgusts us sooner than the empty pomp "of Language."

Other writers make a practice of omitting the relative, in a phrase of a different kind from the former, where they think the meaning can be understood without it. As, "The man I "love." "The dominions we possessed, and the conquests we "made." But though this elliptical style be intelligible, and is allowable in conversation and epistolary writing, yet, in all writings of a serious or dignified kind, it is ungraceful. There, the relative

* On this head, Dr. Lowth's Short Introduction to English Grammar deserves to be consulted; where several nicetics of the Language are well pointed out.

relative ſhould always be inſerted in its proper place, and the conſtruction filled up: "The man whom I love." "The do-"minions which we poſſeſſed, and the conqueſts which we "made."

With regard to the copulative particle, *and*, which occurs ſo frequently in all kinds of compoſition, ſeveral obſervations are to be made. Firſt, It is evident, that the unneceſſary repetition of it enfeebles ſtyle. It has the ſame ſort of effect, as the frequent uſe of the vulgar phraſe, *and ſo*, when one is telling a ſtory in common converſation. We ſhall take a Sentence from Sir William Temple, for an inſtance. He is ſpeaking of the refinement of the French Language: "The acade-"my ſet up by Cardinal Richlieu, to amuſe the wits of that "age and country, and divert them from raking into his politics "and miniſtry, brought this into vogue; and the French wits "have, for this laſt age, been wholly turned to the refinement "of their Style and Language; and indeed, with ſuch ſucceſs, "that it can hardly be equalled, and runs equally through their "verſe and their proſe." Here are no fewer than eight *ands* in one ſentence. This agreeable writer too often makes his ſentences drag in this manner, by a careleſs multiplication of copulatives. It is ſtrange how a writer, ſo accurate as Dean Swift, ſhould have ſtumbled on ſo improper an application of this particle, as he has made in the following Sentence; Eſſay on the Fates of Clergymen. "There is no talent ſo uſeful to-"wards riſing in the world, or which puts men more out of "the reach of fortune, than that quality generally poſſeſt by "the dulleſt ſort of people, and is, in common language, called "diſcretion; a ſpecies of lower prudence, by the aſſiſtance of "which, &c." By the inſertion of, *and is*, in place of, *which is*, he has not only clogged the Sentence, but even made it ungrammatical.

But, in the next place, it is worthy of obſervation, that though the natural uſe of the conjunction, *and*, be to join objects together, and thereby, as one would think, to make their connexion more cloſe; yet, in fact, by dropping the conjunction, we often mark a cloſer connexion, a quicker ſucceſſion of objects, than when it is inſerted between them. Longinus makes this remark; which, from many inſtances, appears to be juſt:

juſt (“Veni, vidi, vici,”* expreſſes with more ſpirit, the rapidity and quick ſucceſſion of conqueſt, than if connecting particles had been uſed.) So, in the following deſcription of a route in Cæſar's Commentaries: “Noſtri, emiſſis pilis, gladiis “rem gerunt; repente poſt tergum equitatus cernitur; cohor- “tes aliæ appropinquant. Hoſtes terga vertunt; fugientibus “equites, occurrunt; fit magna cædes.”† Bell. Gall. l. 7.

Hence, it follows, that (when, on the other hand, we ſeek to prevent a quick tranſition from one object to another, when we are making ſome enumeration, in which we wiſh that the objects ſhould appear as diſtinct from each other as poſſible, and that the mind ſhould reſt, for a moment, on each object by itſelf; in this caſe, copulatives may be multiplied with peculiar advantage and grace. As when Lord Bolingbroke ſays, “Such “a man might fall a victim to power; but truth, and reaſon, “and liberty, would fall with him.”) In the ſame manner, Cæſar deſcribes an engagement with the Nervii: “His equitibus “facile pulſis ac proturbatis, incredibile celeritate ad flumen “decurrerunt; ut pene uno tempore, et ad ſilvas, et in flumine, “et jam in manibus noſtris, hoſtes viderentur.”‡ Bell. Gall. l. 2. Here, although he is deſcribing a quick ſucceſſion of events, yet, as it is his intention to ſhow in how many places the enemy ſeemed to be at one time, the copulative is very happily redoubled, in order to paint more ſtrongly the diſtinction of theſe ſeveral places.

This attention to the ſeveral caſes, when it is proper to omit, and when to redouble the copulative, is of conſiderable importance to all who ſtudy eloquence. For, it is a remarkable particularity in Language, that the omiſſion of a connecting particle ſhould ſometimes ſerve to make objects appear more cloſely connected; and that the repetition of it ſhould diſtinguiſh and ſeparate them, in ſome meaſure, from each other.

* “I came, I ſaw, I conquered.”

† “Our men, after having diſcharged their javelins, attack with ſword in “hand: of a ſudden, the cavalry make their appearance behind; other bod- “ies of men are ſeen drawing near: the enemies turn their backs; the horſe “meet them in their flight; a great ſlaughter enſues.”

‡ “The enemy, having eaſily beat off, and ſcattered this body of horſe, “ran down with incredible celerity to the river; ſo that, almoſt at one “moment of time, they appeared to be in the woods, and in the river, and in “the midſt of our troops.”

other. Hence, the omiſſion of it is uſed to denote rapidity; and the repetition of it is deſigned to retard and to aggravate. The reaſon ſeems to be, that, in the former caſe, the mind is ſuppoſed to be hurried ſo faſt through a quick ſucceſſion of objects, that it has not leiſure to point out their connexion; it drops the copulatives in its hurry; and crowds the whole ſeries together, as if it were but one object. Whereas, when we enumerate, with a view to aggravate, the mind is ſuppoſed to proceed with a more ſlow and ſolemn pace; it marks fully the relation of each object to that which ſucceeds it; and, by joining them together with ſeveral copulatives, makes you perceive, that the objects, though connected, are yet, in themſelves, diſtinct; that they are many, not one. Obſerve, for inſtance, in the following enumeration, made by the apoſtle Paul, what additional weight and diſtinctneſs is given to each particular, by the repetition of a conjunction. "I am perſuaded, that neither "death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor "things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, "nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the "love of God." Rom. viii. 38, 39. So much with regard to the uſe of copulatives.

I proceed to a third rule, for promoting the Strength of a Sentence, which is, to diſpoſe of the capital word, or words, in that place of the Sentence, where they will make the fulleſt impreſſion. That ſuch capital words there are in every Sentence, on which the meaning principally reſts, every one muſt ſee; and that theſe words ſhould poſſeſs a conſpicuous and diſtinguiſhed place, is equally plain. Indeed, that place of the Sentence where they will make the beſt figure, whether the beginning, or the end, or, ſometimes, even in the middle, cannot, as far as I know, be aſcertained by any preciſe rule. This muſt vary with the nature of the Sentence. Perſpicuity muſt ever be ſtudied in the firſt place; and the nature of our Language allows no great liberty in the choice of collocation. For the moſt part, with us, the important words are placed in the beginning of the Sentence. So Mr. Addiſon: "The pleaſures of the im-"agination, taken in their full extent, are not ſo groſs as thoſe "of ſenſe, nor ſo refined as thoſe of the underſtanding." And this, indeed, ſeems the moſt plain and natural order, to place

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that in the front which is the chief object of the propoſition we are laying down. (Sometimes, however, when we intend to give weight to a Sentence, it is of advantage to ſuſpend the meaning for a little, and then bring it out full at the cloſe:) "(Thus," ſays Mr. Pope, "on whatever ſide we contemplate "Homer, what principally ſtrikes us, is, his wonderful inven- "tion." (Pref. to Homer.))

The Greek and Latin writers had a conſiderable advantage above us, in this part of ſtyle. By the great liberty of inverſion, which their Languages permitted, they could chooſe the moſt advantageous ſituation for every word; and had it thereby in their power to give their Sentences more force. Milton, in his proſe works, and ſome other of our old Engliſh writers, endeav- oured to imitate them in this. But the forced conſtructions, which they employed, produced obſcurity; and the genius of our Language, as it is now written and ſpoken, will not admit ſuch liberties. Mr. Gordon, who followed this inverted ſtyle in his Tranſlation of Tacitus, has, ſometimes, done ſuch violence to the Language, as even to appear ridiculous; as in this ex- preſſion: "Into this hole thruſt themſelves three Roman ſena- "tors." He has tranſlated ſo ſimple a phraſe as, "Nullum ea "tempeſtate bellum," by, "War at that time there was none." However, within certain bounds, and to a limited degree, our Language does admit of inverſions; and they are practiſed with ſucceſs by the beſt writers. So Mr. Pope, ſpeaking of Homer, "The praiſe of judgment Virgil has juſtly conteſted with him, "but his invention remains yet unrivalled." It is evident, that, in order to give the Sentence its due force, by contraſting prop- erly the two capital words, "judgment and invention," this is a happier arrangement than if he had followed the natural order, which was, "Virgil has juſtly conteſted with him the praiſe of "judgment, but his invention remains yet unrivalled."

Some writers practice this degree of inverſion, which our Language bears, much more than others; Lord Shafteſbury, for inſtance, much more than Mr. Addiſon; and to this ſort of ar- rangement is owing, in a great meaſure, that appearance of Strength, dignity, and varied harmony, which Lord Shafteſbury's ſtyle poſſeſſes. This will appear from the following Sentences of his Enquiry into Virtue; where all the words are placed,

not

not ſtrictly in the natural order, but with that artificial conſtruction, which may give the period moſt emphaſis and grace. He is ſpeaking of the miſery of vice. "This, as to the complete "immoral ſtate, is, what of their own accord, men readily re-"mark. Where there is this abſolute degeneracy, this total "apoſtacy from all candour, truſt, or equity, there are few who "do not ſee and acknowledge the miſery which is conſequent. "Seldom is the caſe miſconſtrued, when at worſt. The miſ-"fortune is, that we look not on this depravity, nor conſider "how it ſtands, in leſs degrees. As if, to be abſolutely im-"moral, were, indeed the greateſt miſery; but, to be ſo in a "little degree, ſhould be no miſery or harm at all. Which, to "allow, is juſt as reaſonable as to own, that 'tis the greateſt ill "of a body to be in the utmoſt manner maimed or diſtorted; "but that, to loſe the uſe only of one limb, or to be impaired "in ſome ſingle organ or member, is no ill worthy the leaſt no-"tice." (Vol. ii. p. 82.) Here is no violence done to the Language, though there are many inverſions. All is ſtately, and arranged with art; which is the greateſt characteriſtic of this author's ſtyle.

We need only open any page of Mr. Addiſon, to ſee quite a different order in the conſtruction of Sentences. "Our "ſight is the moſt perfect, and moſt delightful of all our ſenſes. "It fills the mind with the largeſt variety of ideas, converſes "with its objects at the greateſt diſtance, and continues the long-"eſt in action, without being tired, or ſatiated with its prop-"er enjoyments. The ſenſe of feeling can, indeed, give us a "notion of extenſion, ſhape, and all other ideas that enter at the "eye, except colours; but, at the ſame time, it is very much ſtrait-"ened and confined in its operations, &c." (Spectator, No. 411.) In this ſtrain, he always proceeds, following the moſt natural and obvious order of the Language: and if, by this means, he has leſs pomp and majeſty than Shafteſbury, he has, in return, more nature, more eaſe and ſimplicity; which are beauties of a higher order.

But whether we practiſe inverſion or not, and in whatever part of the Sentence we diſpoſe of the capital words, it is always a point of great moment, that theſe capital words ſhall ſtand clear and diſentangled from any other words that would

clog

clog them. Thus, when there are any circumſtances of time, place, or other limitations, which the principal object of our Sentence requires to have connected with it, we muſt take eſpecial care to diſpoſe of them, ſo as not to cloud that principal object, nor to bury it under a load of circumſtances. This will be made clearer by an example. Obſerve the arrangement of the following Sentence, in Lord Shafteſbury's Advice to an Author. He is ſpeaking of modern poets, as compared with the ancient: "If, whilſt they profeſs only to pleaſe, they ſecretly "adviſe, and give inſtruction, they may now, perhaps, as well "as formerly, be eſteemed, with juſtice, the beſt and moſt hon-"ourable among authors." This is a well conſtructed Sentence. It contains a great many circumſtances and adverbs, neceſſary to qualify the meaning; *only, ſecretly, as well, perhaps, now, with juſtice, formerly*; yet theſe are placed with ſo much art, as neither to embarraſs, nor weaken the Sentence; while that which is the capital object in it, viz. "Poets being juſtly eſteem-"ed the beſt and moſt honourable among authors," comes out in the concluſion clear and detached, and poſſeſſes its proper place. See, now, what would have been the effect of a different arrangement. Suppoſe him to have placed the members of the Sentence thus: "If, whilſt they profeſs to pleaſe only, they "adviſe and give inſtruction ſecretly, they may be eſteemed the "beſt and moſt honourable among authors, with juſtice, per-"haps, now, as well as formerly." Here we have preciſely the ſame words, and the ſame ſenſe; but, by means of the circumſtances being ſo intermingled as to clog the capital words, the whole becomes perplexed, without grace, and without ſtrength.

A fourth rule, for conſtructing ſentences with proper Strength is, to make the members of them go on riſing and growing in their importance above one another. This ſort of arrangement is called a climax, and is always conſidered as a beauty in compoſition. From what cauſe it pleaſes, is abundantly evident. In all things, we naturally love to aſcend to what is more and more beautiful, rather than to follow the retrograde order. Having had once ſome conſiderable object ſet before us, it is with pain, we are pulled back to attend to an inferior circumſtance. "Cavendum eſt," ſays Quintilian, whoſe authority

thority I always willingly quote, "ne decreſcat oratio, et forti-
"ori ſubjungatur aliquid infirmius; ſicut, ſacrilego, fur; aut
"latroni petulans. Augeri enim debent ſententiæ et inſur-
gere."* Of this beauty, in the conſtruction of Sentences, the orations of Cicero furniſh many examples. His pompous manner naturally led him to ſtudy it; and, generally, in order to render the climax perfect, he makes both the ſenſe and the ſound riſe together, with a very magnificent ſwell. So in his oration for Milo, ſpeaking of a deſign of Clodius's for aſſaſſinating Pompey: "Atqui ſi res, ſi vir, ſi tempus ullum dignum fuit,
"certè hæc in illâ cauſâ ſumma omnia fuerunt. Inſidiator erat
"in Foro collocatus, atque in Veſtibulo ipſo Senatûs; ei viro au-
"tem mors parabatur, cujus in vitâ nitebatur ſalus civitatis; eo
"porrò reipublicæ tempore, quo ſi unus ille occidiſſet, non
"hæc ſolùm civitas, ſed gentes omnes concidiſſent." The following inſtance, from Lord Bolingbroke, is alſo beautiful:
"This decency, this grace, this propriety of manners to char-
"acter, is ſo eſſential to princes in particular, that, whenever
"it is neglected, their virtues loſe a great degree of luſtre, and
"their defects acquire much aggravation. Nay more; by ne-
"glecting this decency and this grace, and for want of a ſuf-
"ficient regard to appearances, even their virtues may betray
"them into failings, their failings into vices, and their vices
"into habits unworthy of princes, and unworthy of men."
(Idea of a Patriot King.)

I muſt obſerve, however, that this ſort of full and oratorical climax, can neither be always obtained, nor ought to be always ſought after. Only ſome kinds of writing admit ſuch Sentences; and, to ſtudy them too frequently, eſpecially if the ſubject require not ſo much pomp, is affected and diſagreeable. But there is ſomething approaching to a climax, which it is a general rule to ſtudy, "ne decreſcat oratio," as Quintilian ſpeaks, "et ne fortiori ſubjungatur aliquid infirmius." A weaker aſſertion or propoſition ſhould never come after a ſtronger one; and when our Sentence conſiſts of two members, the longeſt ſhould, generally, be the concluding one. There is a

 twofold

* "Care muſt be taken, that our compoſition ſhall not fall off, and that a "weaker expreſſion ſhall not follow one of more ſtrength; as if, after ſacrilege, "we ſhould bring in theft; or, having mentioned a robbery, we ſhould ſubjoin "petulance. Sentences ought always to riſe and grow."

twofold reaſon for this laſt direction. (Periods, thus divided, are pronounced more eaſily; and the ſhorteſt member being placed firſt, we carry it more readily in our memory as we proceed to the ſecond, and ſee the connexion of the two more clearly. Thus to ſay, "when our paſſions have forſaken us, "we flatter ourſelves with the belief that we have forſaken "them," is both more graceful and more clear, than to begin with the longeſt part of the propoſition: "We flatter ourſelves "with the belief that we have forſaken our paſſions, when they "have forſaken us.") In general, it is always agreeable to find a Sentence riſing upon us, and growing in its importance to the very laſt word, when this conſtruction can be managed without affectation, or unſeaſonable pomp. "If we riſe yet higher," ſays Mr. Addiſon, very beautifully, "and conſider the fixed "ſtars as ſo many oceans of flame, that are each of them at-"tended with a different ſet of planets; and ſtill diſcover new "firmaments and new lights, that are ſunk farther in thoſe un-"fathomable depths of æther; we are loſt in ſuch a labyrinth "of ſuns and worlds, and confounded with the magnificence "and immenſity of Nature." (Spect. No. 420.) Hence follows clearly,

(A fifth rule for the Strength of Sentences, which is, to avoid concluding them with an adverb, a prepoſition, or any inconſiderable word. Such concluſions are always enfeebling and degrading. There are Sentences, indeed, where the ſtreſs and ſignificancy reſt chiefly upon ſome words of this kind. In this caſe, they are not to be conſidered as circumſtances, but as the capital figures; and ought, in propriety, to have the principal place allotted them. No fault, for inſtance, can be found with this Sentence of Bolingbroke's: "In their proſperity, my friends "ſhall never hear of me; in their adverſity, always." Where *never* and *always*, being emphatical words, were to be ſo placed, as to make a ſtrong impreſſion. But I ſpeak now of thoſe inferior parts of ſpeech, when introduced as circumſtances, or as qualifications of more important words. In ſuch caſe, they ſhould always be diſpoſed of in the leaſt conſpicuous part of the period; and ſo claſſed with the other words of greater dignity, as to be kept in their proper ſecondary ſtation.

(Agreeably to this rule, we ſhould always avoid concluding with any of thoſe particles, which mark the caſes of nouns, *of*, *to*, *from*,

from, with, by. For inſtance, it is a great deal better to ſay, "Avarice is a crime of which wiſe men are often guilty," than to ſay, "Avarice is a crime which wiſe men are often guilty of." This is a phraſeology which all correct writers ſhun, and with reaſon. For, beſides the want of dignity which ariſes from thoſe monoſyllables at the end, the imagination cannot avoid reſting, for a little, on the import of the word which cloſes the ſentence: and, as thoſe prepoſitions have no import of their own, but only ſerve to point out the relations of other words, it is diſagreeable for the mind to be left pauſing on a word, which does not, by itſelf, produce any idea, nor form any picture in the fancy.

For the ſame reaſon, verbs which are uſed in a compound ſenſe, with ſome of theſe prepoſitions, are, though not ſo bad, yet ſtill not ſo beautiful concluſions of a period; ſuch as, *bring about, lay hold of, come over to, clear up*, and many other of this kind: inſtead of which, if we can employ a ſimple verb, it always terminates the Sentence with more ſtrength. Even the pronoun *it*, though it has the import of a ſubſtantive noun, and indeed often forces itſelf upon us unavoidably, yet, when we want to give dignity to a Sentence, ſhould, if poſſible, be avoided in the concluſion; more eſpecially, when it is joined with ſome of the prepoſitions, as, *with it, in it, to it.* In the following Sentence of the Spectator, which otherwiſe is abundantly noble, the bad effect of this cloſe is ſenſible: "There is "not, in my opnion, a more pleaſing and triumphant conſid-"eration in religion, than this, of the perpetual progreſs which "the ſoul makes towards the perfection of its nature, without "ever arriving at a period in it." (No. 111.) How much more graceful the Sentence, if it had been ſo conſtructed as to cloſe with the word, *period!*

Beſides particles and pronouns, any phraſe which expreſſes a circumſtance only, always brings up the rear of a Sentence with a bad grace. We may judge of this, by the following Sentence from Lord Bolingbroke: (Letter on the State of Parties at the Acceſſion of King George I.) "Let me, therefore, "conclude by repeating, that diviſion has cauſed all the miſchief "we lament; that union alone can retrieve it; and that a "great advance towards this union, was the coalition of par-"ties, ſo happily begun, ſo ſucceſsfully carried on, and of late

"ſo

"so unaccountably neglected; to say no worse." This last phrase, *to say no worse*, occasions a sad falling off at the end; so much the more unhappy, as the rest of the period is conducted after the manner of a climax, which we expect to find growing to the last.

The proper disposition of such circumstances in a Sentence, is often attended with considerable trouble, in order to adjust them so, as shall consist equally with the perspicuity and the grace of the period. Though necessary parts, they are, however, like unshapely stones in a building, which try the skill of an artist, where to place them with the least offence. "Junguntur," says Quintilian, "quo congruunt maximè; sicut in "structurâ saxorum rudium, etiam ipsa enormitas invenit cui applicari, et in quo possit insistere."*

The close is always an unsuitable place for them. When the sense admits it, the sooner they are dispatched, generally speaking, the better; that the more important and significant words may possess the last place, quite disencumbered. It is a rule, too, never to crowd too many circumstances together, but rather to intersperse them in different parts of the Sentence, joined with the capital words on which they depend; provided that care be taken, as I before directed, not to clog those capital words with them. For instance, when Dean Swift says, "What "I had the honour of mentioning to your Lordship, some time "ago, in conversation, was not a new thought." (Letter to the Earl of Oxford.) These two circumstances, *some time ago*, and *in conversation*, which are here put together, would have had a better effect disjoined, thus: "What I had the honour, "some time ago, of mentioning to your Lordship in conversa-"tion." And in the following Sentence of Lord Bolingbroke's: (Remarks on the History of England) "A monarchy, limited "like ours, may be placed, for aught I know, as it has been "often represented, just in the middle point, from whence a "deviation leads, on the one hand, to tyranny, and on the other, "to anarchy." The arrangement would have been happier thus: "A monarchy, limited like ours, may, for aught I know, "be placed, as it has often been represented, just in the middle "point, &c." I shall

* "Let them be inserted wherever the happiest place for them can be found; "as, in a structure composed of rough stones, there are always places where the "most irregular and unshapely may find some adjacent one to which it can be "joined, and some basis on which it may rest."

I ſhall give only one rule more, relating to the Strength of a Sentence, which is, that in the members of a Sentence, where two things are compared or contraſted to one another; where either a reſemblance or an oppoſition is intended to be expreſſed; ſome reſemblance, in the language and conſtruction, ſhould be preſerved. For when the things themſelves correſpond to each other, we naturally expect to find the words correſponding too. We are diſappointed when it is otherwiſe; and the compariſon, or contraſt, appears more imperfect. Thus, when Lord Bolingbroke ſays, "The laughers will be for thoſe who have moſt "wit; the ſerious part of mankind, for thoſe who have moſt "reaſon on their ſide;" (Differt. on Parties, Pref.) the oppoſition would have been more complete, if he had ſaid, "The "laughers will be for thoſe who have moſt wit; the ſerious, "for thoſe who have moſt reaſon on their ſide." The following paſſage from Mr. Pope's Preface to his Homer, fully exemplifies the rules I am now giving: "Homer was the greater "genius; Virgil, the better artiſt: in the one, we moſt admire "the man; in the other, the work. Homer hurries us with a "commanding impetuoſity; Virgil leads us with an attractive "majeſty. Homer ſcatters with a generous profuſion; Virgil "beſtows with a careful magnificence. Homer, like the Nile, "pours out his riches with a ſudden overflow; Virgil, like "a river in its banks, with a conſtant ſtream. And when we "look upon their machines, Homer ſeems, like his own Jupi- "ter in his terrors, ſhaking Olympus, ſcattering the lightnings, "and firing the heavens; Virgil, like the ſame Power, in his "benevolence, counſelling with the gods, laying plans for em- "pires, and ordering his whole creation." Periods thus conſtructed, when introduced with propriety, and not returning too often, have a ſenſible beauty. But we muſt beware of carrying our attention to this beauty too far. It ought only to be occaſionally ſtudied, when compariſon or oppoſition of objects naturally leads to it. If ſuch a conſtruction as this be aimed at in all our Sentences, it betrays into a diſagreeable uniformity; produces a regularly returning clink in the period, which tires the ear; and plainly diſcovers affectation. Among the ancients, the ſtyle of Iſocrates is faulty in this reſpect; and, on that account, by ſome of their beſt critics, particularly by Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus, he is ſeverely cenſured.

This

This finiſhes what I had to ſay concerning Sentences, conſidered, with reſpect to their meaning, under the three heads of Perſpicuity, Unity, and Strength. It is a ſubject on which I have inſiſted fully, for two reaſons: Firſt, becauſe it is a ſubject, which, by its nature, can be rendered more didactic, and ſubjected more to preciſe rule, than many other ſubjects of criticiſm; and next, becauſe it appears to me of conſiderable importance and uſe.

For, though many of thoſe attentions, which I have been recommending, may appear minute, yet their effect, upon writing and ſtyle, is much greater than might, at firſt, be imagined. A ſentiment which is expreſſed in a period, clearly, neatly, and happily arranged, makes always a ſtronger impreſſion on the mind, than one that is any how feeble or embarraſſed. Every one feels this upon a compariſon: and if the effect be ſenſible in one Sentence, how much more in a whole diſcourſe, or compoſition, that is made up of ſuch Sentences?

The fundamental rule of the conſtruction of Sentences, and into which all others might be reſolved, undoubtedly is, to communicate, in the cleareſt and moſt natural order, the ideas which we mean to transfuſe into the minds of others. Every arrangement that does moſt juſtice to the ſenſe, and expreſſes it to moſt advantage, ſtrikes us as beautiful. To this point have tended all the rules I have given. And, indeed, did men always think clearly, and were they, at the ſame time, fully maſters of the Language in which they write, there would be occaſion for few rules. Their Sentences would then, of courſe, acquire all thoſe properties of Preciſion, Unity, and Strength, which I have recommended. For we may reſt aſſured, that, whenever we expreſs ourſelves ill, there is, beſides the miſmanagement of Language, for the moſt part, ſome miſtake in our manner of conceiving the ſubject. Embarraſſed, obſcure, and feeble Sentences, are generally, if not always, the reſult of embarraſſed, obſcure, and feeble thought. Thought and Language act and re-act upon each other mutually. Logic and Rhetoric have here, as in many other caſes, a ſtrict connexion; and he that is learning to arrange his Sentences with accuracy and order, is learning, at the ſame time, to think with accuracy and order; an obſervation which alone will juſtify all the care and attention we have beſtowed on this ſubject.

LECTURE

LECTURE XIII.

STRUCTURE OF SENTENCES. HARMONY.

HITHERTO we have conſidered Sentences, with reſpect to their meaning, under the heads of Perſpicuity, Unity, and Strength. We are now to conſider them, with reſpect to their ſound, their Harmony, or agreeableneſs to the ear; which was the laſt quality belonging to them that I propoſed to treat of.

Sound is a quality much inferior to ſenſe; yet ſuch as muſt not be diſregarded. For, as long as ſounds are the vehicle of conveyance for our ideas, there will be always a very conſiderable connexion between the idea which is conveyed, and the nature of the ſound which conveys it. Pleaſing ideas can hardly be tranſmitted to the mind, by means of harſh and diſagreeable ſounds. The imagination revolts as ſoon as it hears them uttered. "Nihil," ſays Quintilian, "poteſt intrare in affectum, "quod in aure, velut quodam veſtibulo, ſtatim offendit."* Muſic has naturally a great power over all men to prompt and facilitate certain emotions: inſomuch, that there are hardly any diſpoſitions which we wiſh to raiſe in others, but certain ſounds may be found concordant to thoſe diſpoſitions, and tending to promote them. Now, Language can, in ſome degree, be rendered capable of this power of muſic; a circumſtance which muſt needs heighten our idea of Language as a wonderful invention. Not content with ſimply interpreting our ideas to others, it can give them thoſe ideas enforced by correſponding ſounds; and, to the pleaſure of communicated thought, can add the new and ſeparate pleaſure of melody.

In the Harmony of Periods, two things may be conſidered. Firſt, Agreeable ſound, or modulation in general, without any particular

* "Nothing can enter into the affections which ſtumbles at the threſhold, "by offending the ear."

particular expreſſion: Next, The ſound ſo ordered, as to become expreſſive of the ſenſe. The firſt is the more common; the ſecond the higher beauty.

Firſt, Let us conſider agreeable ſound, in general, as the property of a well-conſtructed Sentence: and, as it was of proſe Sentences we have hitherto treated, we ſhall confine ourſelves to them under this head. This beauty of muſical conſtruction in proſe, it is plain, will depend upon two things; the choice of words, and the arrangement of them.

I begin with the choice of words; on which head, there is not much to be ſaid, unleſs I were to deſcend into a tedious and frivolous detail concerning the powers of the ſeveral letters, or ſimple ſounds, of which ſpeech is compoſed. It is evident, that words are moſt agreeable to the ear which are compoſed of ſmooth and liquid ſounds, where there is a proper intermixture of vowels and conſonants; without too many harſh conſonants rubbing againſt each other; or too many open vowels in ſucceſſion, to cauſe a hiatus, or diſagreeable aperture of the mouth. It may always be aſſumed as a principle, that, whatever ſounds are difficult in pronunciation, are, in the ſame proportion, harſh and painful to the ear. Vowels give ſoftneſs; conſonants, ſtrength to the ſound of words. The muſic of Language requires a juſt proportion of both; and will be hurt, will be rendered either grating or effeminate by an exceſs of either. Long words are commonly more agreeable to the ear than monoſyllables. They pleaſe it by the compoſition, or ſucceſſion of ſounds which they preſent to it: and, accordingly, the moſt muſical Languages abound moſt in them. Among words of any length, thoſe are the moſt muſical, which do not run wholly either upon long or ſhort ſyllables, but are compoſed of an intermixture of them; ſuch as, *repent, produce, velocity, celerity, independent, impetuoſity.*

The next head, reſpecting the Harmony which reſults from a proper arrangement of the words and members of a period, is more complex, and of greater nicety. For let the words themſelves be ever ſo well choſen, and well ſounding, yet, if they be ill diſpoſed, the muſic of the Sentence is utterly loſt. In the harmonious ſtructure and diſpoſition of periods, no writer whatever, ancient or modern, equals Cicero. He had ſtudied this

this with care; and was fond, perhaps to exceſs, of what he calls, the "Plena ac numeroſa oratio." We need only open his writings, to find inſtances that will render the effect of muſical Language ſenſible to every ear. What, for example, can be more full, round, and ſwelling, than the following ſentence of the 4th Oration againſt Catiline? "Cogitate quantis "laboribus fundatum imperium, quantâ virtute ſtabilitam libertatem, quantâ Deorum benignitate auctas exaggerataſque "fortunas, una nox pene delêrit." In Engliſh, we may take, for an inſtance of a muſical Sentence, the following from Milton, in his Treatiſe on Education: "We ſhall conduct you to "a hill-ſide, laborious, indeed, at the firſt aſcent; but elſe, ſo "ſmooth, ſo green, ſo full of goodly proſpects, and melodious "ſounds on every ſide, that the harp of Orpheus was not more "charming." Every thing in this ſentence conſpires to promote the Harmony. The words are happily choſen; full of liquid and ſoft ſounds; *laborious, ſmooth, green, goodly, melodious, charming:* and theſe words ſo artfully arranged, that, were we to alter the collocation of any one of them, we ſhould, preſently, be ſenſible of the melody ſuffering. For, let us obſerve, how finely the members of the period ſwell one above another. "So ſmooth, ſo green,"—"ſo full of goodly proſpects, and melo-"dious ſounds on every ſide;"—till the ear, prepared by this gradual riſe, is conducted to that full cloſe on which it reſts with pleaſure;—"that the harp of Orpheus was not more "charming."

The ſtructure of periods, then, being ſuſceptible of a melody very ſenſible to the ear, our next inquiry ſhould be, How this melodious ſtructure is formed, what are the principles of it, and by what laws is it regulated? And, upon this ſubject, were I to follow the ancient rhetoricians, it would be eaſy to give a great variety of rules. For here they have entered into a minute and particular detail; more particular, indeed, than on any other head that regards Language. They hold, that to proſe as well as to verſe, there belong certain numbers, leſs ſtrict, indeed, yet ſuch as can be aſcertained by rule. They go ſo far as to ſpecify the feet as they are called, that is, the ſucceſſion of long and ſhort ſyllables, which ſhould enter into the different members of a Sentence, and to ſhow what the

effect of each of these will be. Wherever they treat of the structure of Sentences, it is always the music of them that makes the principal object. Cicero and Quintilian are full of this. The other qualities of Precision, Unity, and Strength, which we consider as of chief importance, they handle slightly; but when they come to the "*junctura et numerus*," the modulation and harmony, there they are copious. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, one of the most judicious critics of antiquity, has written a treatise on the *Composition of Words in a Sentence*, which is altogether confined to their musical effect. He makes the excellency of a Sentence to consist in four things: first, in the sweetness of single sounds; secondly, in the composition of sounds, that is, the numbers or feet; thirdly, in change or variety of sound; and fourthly, in sound suited to the sense. On all these points he writes with great accuracy and refinement; and is very worthy of being consulted; though, were one now to write a book on the structure of Sentences, we should expect to find the subject treated of in a more extensive manner.

In modern times, this whole subject of the musical structure of discourse, it is plain, has been much less studied; and, indeed, for several reasons, can be much less subjected to rule. The reasons, it will be necessary to give, both to justify my not following the track of the ancient rhetoricians on this subject, and to show how it has come to pass, that a part of composition, which once made so conspicuous a figure, now draws much less attention.

In the first place, the ancient Languages, I mean the Greek and the Roman, were much more susceptible than ours, of the graces and the powers of melody. The quantities of their syllables were more fixed and determined; their words were longer, and more sonorous; their method of varying the terminations of nouns and verbs, both introduced a greater variety of liquid sounds, and freed them from that multiplicity of little auxiliary words which we are obliged to employ; and, what is of the greatest consequence, the inversions which their Languages allowed, gave them the power of placing their words in whatever order was most suited to a musical arrangement. All these were great advantages which they enjoyed above us, for harmony of period.

In

In the next place, the Greeks and Romans, the former eſpecially, were, in truth, much more muſical nations than we; their genius was more turned to delight in the melody of ſpeech. Muſic is known to have been a more extenſive art among them than it is with us; more univerſally ſtudied, and applied to a greater variety of objects. Several learned men, particularly the Abbé du Bos, in his Reflections on Poetry and Painting, have clearly proved, that the theatrical compoſitions of the ancients, both their tragedies and comedies, were ſet to a kind of muſic. Whence, the *modos fecit*, and the *Tibiis dextris et ſiniſtris*, prefixed to the editions of Terence's Plays. All ſort of declamation and public ſpeaking, was carried on by them in a much more muſical tone than it is among us. It approached to a kind of chanting or recitative. Among the Athenians, there was what was called the Nomic Melody; or a particular meaſure preſcribed to the public officers, in which they were to promulgate the laws to the people; leſt, by reading them with improper tones, the laws might be expoſed to contempt. Among the Romans, there is a noted ſtory of C. Gracchus, when he was declaiming in public, having a muſician ſtanding at his back, in order to give him the proper tones with a pipe or flute. Even when pronouncing thoſe terrible tribunitial harangues, by which he inflamed the one half of the citizens of Rome againſt the other, this attention to the muſic of ſpeech was, in thoſe times, it ſeems, thought neceſſary to ſucceſs. Quintilian, though he condemns the exceſs of this ſort of pronunciation, yet allows a "cantus obſcurior" to be a beauty in a public ſpeaker. Hence, that variety of accents, acute, grave, and circumflex, which we find marked upon the Greek ſyllables, to expreſs, not the quantity of them, but the tone in which they were to be ſpoken; the application of which is now wholely unknown to us. And though the Romans did not mark thoſe accents in their writing, yet it appears from Quintilian, that they uſed them in pronunciation: "*Quantum, quale*," ſays he, "comparantes gravi, interrogantes "acuto tenore concludant." As muſic then, was an object much more attended to in ſpeech, among the Greeks and Romans, than it is with us; as, in all kinds of public ſpeaking, they employed a much greater variety of notes, of tones, or inflexions

flexions of voice, than we uſe; this is one clear reaſon of their paying a greater attention to that conſtruction of Sentences, which might beſt ſuit this muſical pronunciation.

It is farther known, that, in conſequence of the genius of their Languages, and of their manner of pronouncing them, the muſical arrangement of Sentences, did, in fact, produce a greater effect in public ſpeaking among them, than it could poſſibly do in any modern oration; another reaſon why it deſerved to be more ſtudied. Cicero, in his treatiſe, entitled, *Orator*, tells us, "Conciones ſæpe exclamare vidi, cum verba aptè cecidiſſent. Id enim expectant aures."* And he gives a remarkable inſtance of the effect of a harmonious period upon a whole aſſembly, from a Sentence of one of Carbo's Orations, ſpoken in his hearing. The Sentence was, "Patris dictum ſa-"piens temeritas filii comprobravit." By means of the ſound of which, alone, he tells us, "Tantus clamor concionis excita-"tus eſt, ut prorſus admirabile eſſet." He makes us remark the feet of which theſe words conſiſt, to which he aſcribes the power of the melody; and ſhows how, by altering the collocation, the whole effect would be loſt; as thus: "Patris dic-"tum ſapiens comprobravit temeritas filii." Now, though it be true that Carbo's Sentence is extremely muſical, and would be agreeable, at this day, to any audience, yet I cannot believe that an Engliſh Sentence, equally harmonious, would, by its harmony alone, produce any ſuch effect on a Britiſh audience, or excite any ſuch wonderful applauſe and admiration, as Cicero informs us this of Carbo produced. Our northern ears are too coarſe and obtuſe. The melody of Speech has leſs power over us; and by our ſimpler and plainer method of uttering words, Speech is, in truth, accompanied with leſs melody than it was among the Greeks and Romans.†

For theſe reaſons, I am of opinion, that it is vain to think of beſtowing the ſame attention upon the harmonious ſtructure of our

* "I have often been witneſs to burſts of exclamation in the public aſſem-"blies, when Sentences cloſed muſically; for that is a pleaſure which the ear "expects."

† "In verſu quidem, theatra tota exclamant ſi fuit una ſyllaba aut brevior "aut longior. Nec verò multitudo pedes novit, nec ullos numeros tenet; nec "illud quod offendit, aut cur, aut in quo offendat, intelligit; et tamen omnium "longitudinum et brevitatum in ſonis, ſicut acutarum, graviumque vocum, "judicium ipſa natura in auribus noſtris collocavit." CICERO, Orator, c. 51.

our Sentences, that was beſtowed by theſe ancient nations. The doctrine of the Greek and Roman critics, on this head, has miſled ſome to imagine, that it might be equally applied to our tongue; and that our proſe writing might be regulated by ſpondees and trochees, and iambus's and pœons, and other metrical feet. But, firſt, our words cannot be meaſured, or, at leaſt, can be meaſured very imperfectly by any feet of this kind. For, the quantity, the length and ſhortneſs of our ſyllables, is not, by any means, ſo fixed and ſubjected to rule, as in the Greek and Roman Tongues; but very often left arbitrary, and determined by the emphaſis, and the ſenſe. Next, though our proſe could admit of ſuch metrical regulation, yet, from our plainer method of pronouncing all ſort of diſcourſe, the effect would not be at all ſo ſenſible to the ear, nor be reliſhed with ſo much pleaſure, as among the Greeks and Romans: and, laſtly, this whole doctrine about the meaſures and numbers of proſe, even as it is delivered by the ancient rhetoricians themſelves, is, in truth, in a great meaſure, looſe and uncertain. It appears, indeed, that the melody of diſcourſe was a matter of infinitely more attention to them, than ever it has been to the moderns. But, though they write a great deal about it, they have never been able to reduce it to any rules which could be of real uſe in practice. If we conſult Cicero's *Orator*, where this point is diſcuſſed with the moſt minuteneſs, we will ſee how much theſe ancient critics differed from one another, about the feet proper for the concluſion, and other parts of a Sentence; and how much, after all, was left to the judgment of the ear. Nor, indeed, is it poſſible to give preciſe rules concerning this matter, in any Language; as all proſe compoſition muſt be allowed to run looſe in its numbers; and according as the tenor of a diſcourſe varies, the modulation of Sentences muſt vary infinitely.

But, although I apprehend, that this muſical arrangement cannot be reduced into a ſyſtem, I am far from thinking that it is a quality to be neglected in compoſition. On the contrary, I hold its effect to be very conſiderable; and that every one who ſtudies to write with grace, much more, who ſeeks to pronounce in public, with ſucceſs, will be obliged to attend to it not a little. But it is his ear, cultivated by attention and practice, that muſt chiefly direct him. For any rules that can be given,

given, on this ſubject, are very general. Some rules, however, there are, which may be of uſe to form the ear to the proper Harmony of diſcourſe. I proceed to mention ſuch as appear to me moſt material.

(There are two things on which the muſic of a Sentence chiefly depends. Theſe are, the proper diſtribution of the ſeveral members of it; and, the cloſe or cadence of the whole.)

(Firſt, I ſay, the diſtribution of the ſeveral members is to be carefully attended to. It is of importance to obſerve, that, whatever is eaſy and agreeable to the organs of Speech, always ſounds grateful to the ear. While a period is going on, the termination of each of its members forms a pauſe, or reſt, in pronouncing: and theſe reſts ſhould be ſo diſtributed as to make the courſe of the breathing eaſy, and, at the ſame time, ſhould fall at ſuch diſtances, as to bear a certain muſical proportion to each other. This will be beſt illuſtrated by examples. The following Sentence is from Archbiſhop Tillotſon: "This diſcourſe concerning the eaſineſs of God's commands "does, all along, ſuppoſe and acknowledge the difficulties of "the firſt entrance upon a religious courſe; except, only in "thoſe perſons who have had the happineſs to be trained up "to religion by the eaſy and inſenſible degrees of a pious and "virtuous education." Here there is no Harmony; nay, there is ſome degree of harſhneſs and unpleaſantneſs; owing principally to this, that there is, properly, no more than one pauſe or reſt in the Sentence, falling betwixt the two members into which it is divided; each of which is ſo long as to occaſion a conſiderable ſtretch of the breath in pronouncing it.

Obſerve, now, on the other hand, the eaſe with which the following Sentence, from Sir William Temple, glides along, and the graceful intervals at which the pauſes are placed. He is ſpeaking ſarcaſtically of man: "But, God be thanked, his "pride is greater than his ignorance, and what he wants in "knowledge, he ſupplies by ſufficiency. When he has looked "about him, as far as he can, he concludes, there is no more "to be ſeen; when he is at the end of his line, he is at the "bottom of the ocean; when he has ſhot his beſt, he is ſure "none ever did, or ever can, ſhoot better, or beyond it. His "own reaſon he holds to be the certain meaſure of truth; and

"his

"his own knowledge, of what is poſſible in nature."* Here every thing is, at once, eaſy to the breath, and grateful to the ear; and, it is this ſort of flowing meaſure, this regular and proportional diviſion of the members of his Sentences, which renders Sir William Temple's ſtyle always agreeable. I muſt obſerve, at the ſame time, that a Sentence, with too many reſts, and theſe placed at intervals too apparently meaſured and regular, is apt to favour of affectation.

The next thing to be attended to, is, the cloſe or cadence of the whole Sentence, which, as it is always the part moſt ſenſible to the ear, demands the greateſt care. So Quintilian: "Non igitur durum ſit, neque abruptum, quo animi, velut re-"ſpirant ac reficiuntur. Hæc eſt ſedes orationis; hoc auditor "expectat; hic laus omnis declamat."† The only important rule that can be given here, is, that when we aim at dignity or elevation, the ſound ſhould be made to grow to the laſt; the longeſt members of the period, and the fulleſt and moſt ſonorous words, ſhould be reſerved to the concluſion. As an example of this, the following Sentence of Mr. Addiſon's may be given: "It fills the mind (ſpeaking of ſight) with the largeſt "variety of ideas; converſes with its object at the greateſt diſ-"tance; and continues the longeſt in action, without being "tired or ſatiated with its proper enjoyments." Every reader muſt be ſenſible of a beauty here, both in the proper diviſion of the members and pauſes, and the manner in which the Sentence is rounded, and conducted to a full and harmonious cloſe.

The ſame holds in melody, that I obſerved to take place with reſpect to ſignificancy; that a falling off at the end, always hurts greatly. For this reaſon, particles, pronouns, and little words,

* Or this inſtance. He is addreſſing himſelf to lady Eſſex, upon the death of her child: "I was once in hope, that what was ſo violent could "not be long: but, when I obſerved your grief to grow ſtronger with age, "and to increaſe, like a ſtream, the farther it ran; when I ſaw it draw out "to ſuch unhappy conſequences, and to threaten, no leſs than your child, "your health, and your life, I could no longer forbear this endeavour, nor "end it without begging of you, for God's ſake, and for your own, for your "children, and your friends, your country, and your family, that you would "no longer abandon yourſelf to a diſconſolate paſſion; but that you would, "at length, awaken your piety, give way to your prudence, or, at leaſt, rouſe "the invincible ſpirit of the Percy's, that never yet ſhrunk at any diſaſter."

† "Let there be nothing raſh or abſurd in the concluſion of the ſentence, "on which the mind pauſes and reſts. This is the moſt material part of the "ſtructure of diſcourſe. Here every hearer expects to be gratified; here his "applauſe breaks forth."

words, are as ungracious to the ear, at the concluſion, as I formerly ſhewed they were inconſiſtent with ſtrength of expreſſion. It is more than probable, that the ſenſe and the ſound have here a mutual influence on each other. That which hurts the ear, ſeems to mar the ſtrength of the meaning; and that which really degrades the ſenſe, in conſequence of this primary effect, appears alſo to have a bad ſound. How diſagreeable is the following ſentence of an Author, ſpeaking of the Trinity! "It is a myſtery which we firmly believe the truth of, and "humbly adore the depth of." And how eaſily could it have been mended by this tranſpoſition! "It is a myſtery, the truth "of which we firmly believe, and the depth of which we hum-"bly adore." In general it ſeems to hold, that a muſical cloſe, in our language, requires either the laſt ſyllable, or the penult, that is, the laſt but one, to be a long ſyllable. Words which conſiſt moſtly of ſhort ſyllables, as, *contrary*, *particular*, *retroſpect*, ſeldom conclude a Sentence harmoniouſly, unleſs a run of long ſyllables, before, has rendered them agreeable to the ear.

It is neceſſary, however, to obſerve, that Sentences ſo conſtructed as to make the ſound always ſwell and grow towards the end, and to reſt either on a long or a penult long ſyllable, give a diſcourſe the tone of declamation. The ear ſoon becomes acquainted with the melody, and is apt to be cloyed with it. If we would keep up the attention of the reader or hearer, if we would preſerve vivacity and ſtrength in our compoſition, we muſt be very attentive to vary our meaſures. This regards the diſtribution of the members, as well as the cadence of the period. Sentences conſtructed in a ſimilar manner, with the pauſes falling at equal intervals, ſhould never follow another. Short Sentences ſhould be intermixed with long and ſwelling ones, to render diſcourſe ſprightly, as well as magnificent. Even diſcords, properly introduced, abrupt ſounds, departures from regular cadence, have ſometimes a good effect. Monotony is the great fault into which writers are apt to fall, who are fond of harmonious arrangement: and to have only one tune, or meaſure, is not much better than having none at all. A very vulgar ear will enable a writer to catch ſome one melody, and to form the run of his Sentences according to it; which ſoon proves diſguſting. But a juſt and correct ear is requiſite for varying and diverſifying the melody; and hence we ſo ſeldom

dom meet with authors, who are remarkably happy in this reſpect.

Though attention to the muſic of Sentences muſt not be neglected, yet it muſt alſo be kept within proper bounds: for all appearances of an author's affecting Harmony, are diſagreeable; eſpecially when the love of it betrays him ſo far, as to ſacrifice, in any inſtance, perſpicuity, preciſion, or ſtrength of ſentiment, to ſound. All unmeaning words, introduced merely to round the period, or fill up the melody, *complementa numerorum*, as Cicero calls them, are great blemiſhes in writing. They are childiſh and puerile ornaments, by which a Sentence always loſes more in point of weight, than it can gain by ſuch additions to the beauty of its ſound. Senſe has its own Harmony, as well as ſound; and, where the ſenſe of a period is expreſſed with clearneſs, force, and dignity, it will ſeldom happen but the words will ſtrike the ear agreeably; at leaſt, a very moderate attention is all that is requiſite for making the cadence of ſuch a period pleaſing: and the effect of greater attention is often no other, than to render compoſition languid and enervated. After all the labour which Quintilian beſtows on regulating the meaſures of proſe, he comes at laſt, with his uſual good ſenſe, to this concluſion: "In univerſum, ſi ſit neceſſe, duram potiùs atque aſperam compoſitionem malim eſſe, quam effeminatam ac enervem, qualis apud multos. Ideòque, vincta quædam de induſtria ſunt ſolvenda, ne laborata videantur; neque ullum idoneum aut aptum verbum prætermittamus, gratiâ lenitatis."* (Lib. ix. c. 4.)

Cicero, as I before obſerved, is one of the moſt remarkable patterns of a harmonious ſtyle. His love of it, however, is too viſible; and the pomp of his numbers ſometimes detracts from his ſtrength. That noted cloſe of his *eſſe videatur*, which, in the Oration Pro Lege Manilia, occurs eleven times, expoſed him to cenſure among his cotemporaries. We muſt obſerve, however, in defence of this great orator, that there is a remarkable union in his ſtyle, of Harmony with eaſe, which is always a

* "Upon the whole, I would rather chooſe, that compoſition ſhould appear rough and harſh, if that be neceſſary, than that it ſhould be enervated and effeminate, ſuch as we find the ſtyle of too many. Some ſentences, therefore, which we have ſtudiouſly formed into melody, ſhould be thrown looſe, that they may not ſeem too much laboured: nor ought we ever to omit any proper or expreſſive word, for the ſake of ſmoothing a period."

great beauty; and if his Harmony be ſometimes thought ſtudied, that ſtudy appears to have coſt him little trouble.

Among our Engliſh claſſics, not many are diſtinguiſhed for muſical arrangement. Milton, in ſome of his proſe works, has very finely turned periods; but the writers of his age indulged a liberty of inverſion, which now would be reckoned contrary to purity of ſtyle: and though this allowed their Sentences to be more ſtately and ſonorous, yet it gave them too much of a Latiniſed conſtruction and order. Of later writers, Shafteſbury is, upon the whole, the moſt correct in his numbers. As his ear was delicate, he has attended to muſic in all his Sentences; and he is peculiarly happy in this reſpect, that he has avoided the monotony into which writers, who ſtudy the grace of ſound, are very apt to fall; having diverſified his periods with great variety. Mr. Addiſon has alſo much Harmony in his ſtyle; more eaſy and ſmooth, but leſs varied, than Lord Shafteſbury. Sir William Temple is, in general, very flowing and agreeable. Archbiſhop Tillotſon, is too often careleſs and languid; and is much outdone by Biſhop Atterbury in the muſic of his periods. Dean Swift deſpiſed muſical arrangement altogether.

Hitherto I have diſcourſed of agreeable ſound, or modulation, in general. It yet remains to treat of a higher beauty of this kind; the ſound adapted to the ſenſe. The former was no more than a ſimple accompaniment, to pleaſe the ear; the latter ſuppoſes a peculiar expreſſion given to the muſic. We may remark two degrees of it: Firſt, the current of ſound, adapted to the tenor of a diſcourſe; next, a particular reſemblance effected between ſome object, and the ſounds that are employed in deſcribing it.

Firſt, I ſay, the current of ſound may be adapted to the tenor of a diſcourſe. Sounds have, in many reſpects, a correſpondence with our ideas; partly natural, partly the effect of artificial aſſociations. Hence it happens, that any one modulation of ſound continued, imprints on our ſtyle a certain character and expreſſion. Sentences conſtructed with the Ciceronian fulneſs and ſwell, produce the impreſſion of what is important, magnificent, ſedate; for this is the natural tone which ſuch a courſe of ſentiment aſſumes. But they ſuit no violent paſſion, no eager reaſoning, no familiar addreſs. Theſe always require

meaſures

meaſures briſker, eaſier, and often more abrupt. And, therefore, to ſwell, or to let down the periods, as the ſubject demands, is a very important rule in oratory. No one tenor whatever, ſuppoſing it to produce no bad effect from ſatiety, will anſwer to all different compoſitions; nor even to all the parts of the ſame compoſition. It were as abſurd to write a panegyric, and an invective, in a ſtyle of the ſame cadence, as to ſet the words of a tender love-ſong to the air of a warlike march.

Obſerve how finely the following Sentence of Cicero is adapted, to repreſent the tranquillity and eaſe of a ſatisfied ſtate. "Etſi homini nihil eſt magis optandum quam proſpera, æquabi-"lis, perpetuaque fortuna, ſecundo vitæ ſine ulla offenſione "curſu; tamen, ſi mihi tranquilla et placata omnia fuiſſent, "incredibili quâdam et penè divinâ, quâ nunc veſtro beneficio "fruor, lætitiæ voluptate caruiſſem."* Nothing was ever more perfect in its kind: it paints, if we may ſo ſpeak, to the ear. But, who would not have laughed, if Cicero had employed ſuch periods, or ſuch a cadence as this, in inveighing againſt Mark Antony, or Catiline? What is requiſite, therefore, is, that we previouſly fix, in our mind, a juſt idea of the general tone of ſound which ſuits our ſubject; that is, which the ſentiments we are to expreſs, moſt naturally aſſume, and in which they moſt commonly vent themſelves; whether round and ſmooth, or ſtately and ſolemn, or briſk and quick, or interrupted and abrupt. This general idea muſt direct the modulation of our periods; to ſpeak in the ſtyle of muſic, muſt give us the key-note, muſt form the ground of the melody; varied and diverſified in parts, according as either our ſentiments are diverſified, or as is requiſite for producing a ſuitable variety to gratify the ear.

It may be proper to remark, that our tranſlators of the Bible have often been happy in ſuiting their numbers to the ſubject. Grave, ſolemn, and majeſtic ſubjects undoubtedly require ſuch an arrangement of words as runs much on long ſyllables; and, particularly, they require the cloſe to reſt upon ſuch. The very firſt verſes of the Bible, are remarkable for this melody; "In "the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; and "the earth was without form, and void; and darkneſs was "upon

* Orat. ad Quirites, poſt Reditum.

"upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon "the face of the waters." Several other paſſages, particularly ſome of the Pſalms, afford ſtriking examples of this ſort of grave, melodious conſtruction. Any compoſition that riſes conſiderably above the ordinary tone of proſe, ſuch as monumental inſcriptions, and panegyrical characters, naturally runs into numbers of this kind.

But, in the next place, beſides the general correſpondence of the current of ſound with the current of thought, there may be a more particular expreſſion attempted, of certain objects, by means of reſembling ſounds. This can be, ſometimes, accompliſhed in proſe compoſition; but there only in a more faint degree; nor is it ſo much expected there. In poetry, chiefly, it is looked for; where attention to ſound is more demanded, and where the inverſions and liberties of poetical ſtyle give us a greater command of ſound; aſſiſted, too, by the verſification, and that *cantus obſcurior*, to which we are naturally led in reading poetry. This requires a little more illuſtration.

The ſounds of words may be employed for repreſenting, chiefly, three claſſes of objects; firſt, other ſounds; ſecondly, motion; and, thirdly, the emotions and paſſions of the mind.

Firſt, I ſay, by a proper choice of words, we may produce a reſemblance of other ſounds which we mean to deſcribe, ſuch as, the noiſe of waters, the roaring of winds, or the murmuring of ſtreams. This is the ſimpleſt inſtance of this ſort of beauty. For the medium through which we imitate here, is a natural one; ſounds repreſented by other ſounds; and between ideas of the ſame ſenſe, it is eaſy to form a connexion. No very great art is required in a poet, when he is deſcribing ſweet and ſoft ſounds, to make uſe of ſuch words as have moſt liquids and vowels, and glide the ſofteſt; or, when he is deſcribing harſh ſounds, to throw together a number of harſh ſyllables which are of difficult pronunciation. Here the common ſtructure of Language aſſiſts him; for it will be found, that in moſt Languages, the names of many particular ſounds are ſo formed, as to carry ſome affinity to the ſound which they ſignify; as with us, the *whiſtling* of winds, the *buz* and *hum* of inſects, the *hiſs* of ſerpents, the *craſh* of falling timber; and many other inſtances, where the word has been plainly framed upon the ſound

it

it repreſents. I ſhall produce a remarkable example of this beauty from Milton, taken from two paſſages in Paradiſe Loſt, deſcribing the ſound made, in the one, by the opening of the gates of hell; in the other, by the opening of thoſe of heaven. The contraſt between the two, diſplays, to great advantage, the poet's art. The firſt is the opening of hell's gates:

——————On a ſudden, open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and jarring ſound,
Th' infernal doors; and on their hinges grate
Harſh thunder.—————— B. I.

Obſerve, now, the ſmoothneſs of the other:

————————Heaven opened wide
Her ever-during gates, harmonious ſound,
On golden hinges turning.———— B. II.

The following beautiful paſſage from Taſſo's Gieruſalemme, has been often admired on account of the imitation effected by ſound of the thing repreſented:

Chiama gli habitator de l'ombre eterne
Il rauco ſuon de la Tartarea tromba:
Treman le ſpacioſe atre caverne,
Et l'aer cieco a quel rumor rimbomba;
Ne ſtridendo coſi de le ſuperne
Regioni dele cielo, il folgor piomba;
Ne ſi ſcoſſa giammai la terra,
Quand i vapori in ſen gravida ſerra. CANT. IV. STANZ. 4.

The ſecond claſs of objects, which the ſound of words is often employed to imitate, is, Motion; as it is ſwift or ſlow, violent or gentle, equable or interrupted, eaſy or accompanied with effort. Though there be no natural affinity between ſound, of any kind, and motion, yet, in the imagination, there is a ſtrong one; as appears from the connexion between muſic and dancing. And, therefore, here it is in the poet's power to give us a lively idea, of the kind of motion he would deſcribe, by means of ſounds which correſpond, in our imagination with that motion. Long ſyllables naturally give the impreſſion of ſlow motion; as in this line of Virgil:

Olli inter ſeſe magna vi brachia tollunt.

A ſucceſſion of ſhort ſyllables preſents quick motion to the mind; as,

Quadrupedante putrem ſonitu quatit ungula campum.

Both

Both Homer and Virgil are great maſters of this beauty; and their works abound with inſtances of it; moſt of them, indeed, ſo often quoted, and ſo well known, that it is needleſs to produce them. I ſhall give one inſtance, in Engliſh, which ſeems happy. It is the deſcription of a ſudden calm on the ſeas, in a Poem, entitled, *The Fleece.*

——————With eaſy courſe
The veſſels glide; unleſs their ſpeed be ſtopp'd
By dead calms, that oft lie on theſe ſmooth ſeas
When every zephyr ſleeps; then the ſhrouds drop;
The downy feather, on the cordage hung,
Moves not; the flat ſea ſhines like yellow gold
Fus'd in the fire, or like the marble floor
Of ſome old temple wide.——————

The third ſet of objects which I mentioned the ſounds of words are capable of repreſenting, conſiſts of the paſſions and emotions of the mind. Sound may, at firſt view, appear foreign to theſe; but, that here alſo, there is ſome ſort of connexion, is ſufficiently proved by the power which muſic has to awaken, or to aſſiſt certain paſſions, and, according as its ſtrain is varied, to introduce one train of ideas, rather than another. This, indeed, logically ſpeaking, cannot be called a reſemblance between the ſenſe and the ſound, ſeeing long or ſhort ſyllables have no natural reſemblance to any thought or paſſion. But if the arrangement of ſyllables, by their ſound alone, recal one ſet of ideas more readily than another, and diſpoſe the mind for entering into that affection which the poet means to raiſe, ſuch arrangement may, juſtly enough, be ſaid to reſemble the ſenſe, or be ſimilar and correſpondent to it. I admit, that, in many inſtances, which are ſuppoſed to diſplay this beauty of accommodation of ſound to the ſenſe, there is much room for imagination to work; and, according as a reader is ſtruck by a paſſage, he will often fancy a reſemblance between the ſound and the ſenſe, which others cannot diſcover. He modulates the numbers to his own diſpoſition of mind; and, in effect, makes the muſic which he imagines himſelf to hear. However, that there are real inſtances of this kind, and that poetry is capable of ſome ſuch expreſſion, cannot be doubted. Dryden's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day, affords a very beautiful exemplification of it, in the Engliſh Language. Without

out much ſtudy or reflection, a poet deſcribing pleaſure, joy, and agreeable objects, from the feeling of his ſubject, naturally runs into ſmooth, liquid, and flowing numbers.

——————Namque ipſa decoram
Cæſariem nato genitrix, lumenque juventæ
Purpureum, et lætos oculis afflârat honores.

ÆN. I.

Or,

Devenêre locos lætos & amæna vireta
Fortunatorum, nemorum, ſedeſque beatas;
Largior hic campos æther, & lumine veſtit
Purpereo, ſolemque ſuum, ſua ſidera nôrunt.

ÆN. VI.

Briſk and lively ſenſations, exact quicker and more animated numbers.

——————Juvenum manus emicat ardens
Littus in Heſperium. ÆN. VII.

Melancholy and gloomy ſubjects, naturally expreſs themſelves in ſlow meaſures, and long words:

In thoſe deep ſolitudes and awful cells,
Where heavenly penſive contemplation dwells.

Et caligantem nigrâ formidine lucum.

I have now given ſufficient openings into this ſubject: a moderate acquaintance with the good poets, either ancient or modern, will ſuggeſt many inſtances of the ſame kind. And with this, I finiſh the diſcuſſion of the Structure of Sentences; having fully conſidered them under all the heads I mentioned; of Perſpicuity, Unity, Strength, and Muſical Arrangement.

LECTURE

LECTURE XIV.

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE.

HAVING now finiſhed what related to the conſtruction of ſentences, I proceed to other rules concerning Style. My general diviſion of the qualities of Style, was into Perſpicuity and Ornament. Perſpicuity, both in ſingle words and in ſentences, I have conſidered. Ornament, as far as it ariſes from a graceful, ſtrong, or melodious conſtruction of words, has alſo been treated of. Another, and a great branch of the ornament of Style, is, Figurative Language; which is now to be the ſubject of our conſideration, and will require a full diſcuſſion.

Our firſt inquiry muſt be, What is meant by Figures of Speech?*

In general, they always imply ſome departure from ſimplicity of expreſſion; the idea which we intend to convey, not only enunciated to others, but enunciated, in a particular manner, and with ſome circumſtance, added, which is deſigned to render the impreſſion more ſtrong and vivid. When I ſay, for inſtance, "That a good man enjoys comfort in the midſt of adverſity;" I juſt expreſs my thought in the ſimpleſt manner poſſible. But when I ſay, "To the upright there ariſeth light in darkneſs;" the ſame ſentiment is expreſſed in a Figurative Style; a new circumſtance is introduced; light is put in the place of comfort, and darkneſs is uſed to ſuggeſt the idea of adverſity. In the ſame

* On the ſubject of Figures of Speech, all the writers who treat of rhetoric or compoſition, have inſiſted largely. To make references, therefore, on this ſubject, were endleſs. On the foundations of Figurative Language, in general, one of the moſt ſenſible, and inſtructive writers appears to me, to be M. Marſais, in his *Traité des Tropes pour ſervir d' Introduction à la Rhetorique, & à la Logique.* For obſervations on particular Figures, the *Elements of Criticiſm* may be conſulted, where the ſubject is fully handled, and illuſtrated by a great variety of examples.

ſame manner, to ſay, "It is impoſſible, by any ſearch we can "make, to explore the divine Nature fully," is to make a ſimple propoſition. But when we ſay, "Canſt thou, by ſearching, "find out God? Canſt thou find out the Almighty to perfec- "tion? It is high as heaven, what canſt thou do? deeper "than hell, what canſt thou know?" This introduces a Figure into Style; the propoſition being not only expreſſed, but admiration and aſtoniſhment being expreſſed together with it.

But, though Figures imply a deviation from what may be reckoned the moſt ſimple form of ſpeech, we are not thence to conclude, that they imply any thing uncommon, or unnatural. This is ſo far from being the caſe, that, on very many occaſions, they are both the moſt natural, and the moſt common method of uttering our ſentiments. It is impoſſible to compoſe any diſcourſe without uſing them often; nay, there are few ſentences of any length, in which ſome expreſſion or other, that may be termed a Figure, does not occur. From what cauſes this happens, ſhall be afterwards explained. The fact, in the mean time, ſhows, that they are to be accounted part of that Language which nature dictates to men. They are not the invention of the ſchools, nor the mere product of ſtudy: on the contrary, the moſt illiterate ſpeak in Figures, as often as the moſt learned. Whenever the imaginations of the vulgar are much awakened, or their paſſions inflamed againſt one another, they will pour forth a torrent of Figurative Language, as forcible as could be employed by the moſt artificial declaimer.

What then is it, which has drawn the attention of critics and rhetoricians ſo much to theſe forms of Speech? It is this: They remarked, that in them conſiſts much of the beauty and the force of Language; and found them always to bear ſome characters, or diſtinguiſhing marks, by the help of which they could reduce them under ſeparate claſſes and heads. To this, perhaps, they owe their name of Figures. As the Figure, or ſhape of one body, diſtinguiſhes it from another, ſo theſe forms of Speech have, each of them, a caſt or turn peculiar to itſelf, which both diſtinguiſhes it from the reſt, and diſtinguiſhes it from ſimple expreſſion. Simple expreſſion juſt makes our idea known to others; but Figurative Language, over and above,

beſtows a particular dreſs upon that idea; a dreſs, which both makes it be remarked, and adorns it. Hence, this ſort of Language became early a capital object of attention to thoſe who ſtudied the powers of Speech.

Figures, in general, may be deſcribed to be that Language, which is prompted either by the imagination, or by the paſſions. The juſtneſs of this deſcription will appear, from the more particular account I am afterwards to give of them. Rhetoricians commonly divide them into two great claſſes; Figures of Words, and Figures of Thought. The former, Figures of Words, are commonly called Tropes, and conſiſt in a word's being employed to ſignify ſomething that is different from its original and primitive meaning; ſo that if you alter the word, you deſtroy the Figure. Thus, in the inſtance I gave before; "Light ariſeth to the upright in darkneſs." The Trope conſiſts in "light and darkneſs" being not meant literally, but ſubſtituted for comfort and adverſity, on account of ſome reſemblance or analogy, which they are ſuppoſed to bear to theſe conditions of life. The other claſs, termed Figures of Thought, ſuppoſes the words to be uſed in their proper and literal meaning, and the Figure to conſiſt in the turn of the Thought; as is the caſe in exclamations, interrogations, apoſtrophes, and compariſons; where, though you vary the words that are uſed, or tranſlate them from one Language into another, you may, nevertheleſs, ſtill preſerve the ſame Figure in the Thought. This diſtinction, however, is of no great uſe; as nothing can be built upon it in practice; neither is it always very clear. It is of little importance, whether we give to ſome particular mode of expreſſion the name of a Trope, or of a Figure; provided we remember, that Figurative Language always imports ſome colouring of the imagination, or ſome emotion of paſſion, expreſſed in our Style: and, perhaps, Figures of imagination, and Figures of paſſion, might be a more uſeful diſtribution of the ſubject. But without inſiſting on any artificial diviſions, it will be the more uſeful, that I inquire into the Origin and the Nature of Figures. Only, before proceeding to this, there are two general obſervations which it may be proper to premiſe.

The firſt is, concerning the uſe of rules with reſpect to Figurative Language. I admit, that perſons may both ſpeak and write

write with propriety, who know not the names of any of the Figures of Speech, nor ever ſtudied any rules relating to them. Nature, as was before obſerved, dictates the uſe of Figures; and, like Monſ. Jourdain, in Moliere, who had ſpoken for forty years in proſe, without ever knowing it, many a one uſes metaphorical expreſſions to good purpoſe, without any idea of what a metaphor is. It will not, however, follow thence, that rules are of no ſervice. All ſcience ariſes from obſervations on practice. Practice has always gone before method and rule; but method and rule have afterwards improved and perfected practice, in every art. We every day, meet with perſons who ſing agreeably, without knowing one note of the gamut. Yet, it has been found of importance to reduce theſe notes to a ſcale, and to form an art of muſic; and it would be ridiculous to pretend, that the art is of no advantage, becauſe the practice is founded in nature. Propriety and beauty of Speech, are certainly as improveable as the ear or the voice; and to know the principles of this beauty, or the reaſons which render one Figure, or one manner of Speech preferable to another, cannot fail to aſſiſt and direct a proper choice.

But I muſt obſerve, in the next place, that although this part of ſtyle merits attention, and be a very proper object of ſcience and rule; although much of the beauty of compoſition depends on Figurative Language; yet we muſt beware of imagining that it depends ſolely, or even chiefly, upon ſuch Language. It is not ſo. The great place which the doctrine of Tropes and Figures has occupied in ſyſtems of rhetoric; the over-anxious care which has been ſhewn in giving names to a vaſt variety of them, and in ranging them under different claſſes, has often led perſons to imagine, that if their compoſition was well beſpangled with a number of theſe ornaments of ſpeech, it wanted no other beauty; whence has ariſen much ſtiffneſs and affectation. For it is, in truth, the ſentiment or paſſion, which lies under the figured expreſſion, that gives it any merit. The Figure is only the dreſs; the ſentiment is the body and the ſubſtance. No Figures will render a cold or an empty compoſition intereſting; whereas, if a ſentiment be ſublime or pathetic, it can ſupport itſelf perfectly well, without any borrowed aſſiſtance. Hence ſeveral of the moſt affecting and admired paſ-

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ſages of the beſt authors, are expreſſed in the ſimpleſt Language. The following ſentiment from Virgil, for inſtance, makes its way at once to the heart, without the help of any Figure whatever. He is deſcribing an Argive, who falls in battle, in Italy, at a great diſtance from his native country:

Sternitur, infelix, alieno vulnere, cœlumque
Aſpicit, et dulces moriens reminiſcitur Argos.* Æn. x. 781.

A ſingle ſtroke of this kind, drawn as by the very pencil of nature, is worth a thouſand Figures. In the ſame manner, the ſimple ſtyle of ſcripture: "He ſpoke, and it was done; he "commanded, and it ſtood faſt." "God ſaid, let there be "light; and there was light," imports a lofty conception to much greater advantage, than if it had been decorated by the moſt pompous metaphors. The fact is, that the ſtrong pathetic, and the pure ſublime, not only have little dependence on Figures of ſpeech, but, generally, reject them. The proper region of theſe ornaments is, where a moderate degree of elevation and paſſion is predominant; and there they contribute to the embelliſhment of diſcourſe, only, when there is a baſis of

* "Anthares had from Argos travell'd far,
"Alcides' friend, and brother of the war;
"Now falling, by another's wound, his eyes
"He caſts to Heaven, on Argos thinks, and dies."

In this tranſlation, much of the beauty of the original is loſt. "On Argos thinks and dies," is by no means equal to "dulces moriens reminiſcitur Argos." "As "he dies, he remembers his beloved Argos." It is indeed obſervable, that in moſt of thoſe tender and pathetic paſſages, which do ſo much honour to Virgil, that great poet expreſſes himſelf with the utmoſt ſimplicity; as

Te, dulcis Conjux, te ſolo in littore ſecum,
Te veniente die, te decedente canebat. Georg. IV.

And ſo in that moving prayer of Evander, upon his parting with his ſon Pallas:

At vos, O Superi! et Divûm tu maxime rector
Jupiter, Arcadi quæſo miſereſcite regis,
Et patrias audite preces. Si numina veſtra
Incolumem Pallanta mihi, ſi fata reſervant,
Si viſurus eum vivo, et venturus in unum,
Vitam oro; patiar quemvis durare laborem!
Sin aliquem infandum caſum, Fortuna, minaris,
Nunc, O nunc liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam!
Dum curæ ambiguæ, dum ſpes incerta futuri;
Dum, te chare Puer! mea ſera et ſola voluptas!
Amplexu teneo; gravior ne nuncius aures
Vulneret—— Æn. VIII. 572.

of ſolid thought and natural ſentiment; when they are inſerted in their proper place; and when they riſe, of themſelves, from the ſubject, without being ſought after.

Having premiſed theſe obſervations, I proceed to give an account of the Origin and Nature of Figures; principally of ſuch as have their dependence on Language; including that numerous tribe, which the rhetoricians call Tropes.

At the firſt riſe of Language, men would begin with giving names to the different objects which they diſcerned, or thought of. This nomenclature would, at the beginning, be very narrow. According as men's ideas multiplied, and their acquaintance with objects increaſed, their ſtock of names and words would increaſe alſo. But to the infinite variety of objects and ideas, no Language is adequate. No Language is ſo copious, as to have a ſeparate word for every ſeparate idea. Men naturally ſought to abridge this labour of multiplying words *in infinitum*; and, in order to lay leſs burden on their memories, made one word, which they had already appropriated to a certain idea or object, ſtand alſo for ſome other idea or object; between which and the primary one, they found, or fancied, ſome relation. Thus, the prepoſition, *in*, was originally invented to expreſs the circumſtance of place: "The man was "killed *in* the wood." In progreſs of time, words were wanted to expreſs men's being connected with certain conditions of fortune, or certain ſituations of mind; and ſome reſemblance, or analogy, being fancied between theſe, and the place of bodies, the word, *in*, was employed to expreſs men's being ſo circumſtanced; as, one's being *in* health, or *in* ſickneſs, *in* proſperity or *in* adverſity, *in* joy or *in* grief, *in* doubt, or *in* danger, or *in* ſafety. Here we ſee this prepoſition, *in*, plainly aſſuming a tropical ſignification, or carried off from its original meaning, to ſignify ſomething elſe, which relates to, or reſembles it.

Tropes of this kind abound in all Languages, and are plainly owing to the want of proper words. The operations of the mind and affections, in particular, are, in moſt Languages, deſcribed by words taken from ſenſible objects. The reaſon is plain. The names of ſenſible objects, were, in all Languages, the words moſt early introduced; and were, by degrees, extend-

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ed to thoſe mental objects, of which men had more obſcure conceptions, and to which they found it more difficult to aſſign diſtinct names. They borrowed, therefore, the name of ſome ſenſible idea, where their imagination found ſome affinity. Thus, we ſpeak of, a *piercing* judgment, and a *clear* head; a *ſoft* or a *hard* heart; a *rough* or a *ſmooth* behaviour. We ſay, *inflamed* by anger, *warmed* by love; *ſwelled* with pride, *melted* into grief; and theſe are almoſt the only ſignificant words which we have for ſuch ideas.

But, although the barrenneſs of Language, and the want of words, be doubtleſs one cauſe of the invention of Tropes; yet it is not the only, nor, perhaps, even the principal ſource of this form of ſpeech. Tropes have ariſen more frequently, and ſpread themſelves wider, from the influence which imagination poſſeſſes over Language. The train on which this has proceeded among all nations, I ſhall endeavour to explain.

Every object which makes any impreſſion on the human mind, is conſtantly accompanied with certain circumſtances and relations, that ſtrike us at the ſame time. It never preſents itſelf to our view, *iſolé*, as the French expreſs it; that is, independent on, and ſeparated from, every other thing; but always occurs as ſomehow related to other objects; going before them, or following after them; their effect or their cauſe; reſembling them, or oppoſed to them; diſtinguiſhed by certain qualities, or ſurrounded with certain circumſtances. By this means, every idea or object carries in its train ſome other ideas, which may be conſidered as its acceſſories. Theſe acceſſories often ſtrike the imagination more than the principal idea itſelf. They are, perhaps, more agreeable ideas; or they are more familiar to our conceptions; or they recal to our memory a greater variety of important circumſtances. The imagination is more diſpoſed to reſt upon ſome of them; and therefore inſtead of uſing the proper name of the principal idea which it means to expreſs, it employs, in its place, the name of the acceſſory or correſpondent idea; although the pincipal have a proper and well-known name of its own. Hence a vaſt variety of tropical or figurative words obtain currency in all Languages, through choice, not neceſſity; and men of lively imaginations are every day adding to their number.

Thus,

Thus, when we design to intimate the period, at which a ſtate enjoyed moſt reputation or glory, it were eaſy to employ the proper words for expreſſing this; but as this is readily connected, in our imagination, with the flouriſhing period of a plant or a tree, we lay hold of this correſpondent idea, and ſay, "The Roman empire flouriſhed moſt under Auguſtus." The leader of a faction is plain Language; but, becauſe the head is the principal part of the human body, and is ſuppoſed to direct all the animal operations, reſting upon this reſemblance, we ſay, "Catiline was the head of the party." The word, *voice*, was originally invented to ſignify the articulate ſound, formed by the organs of the mouth; but, as by means of it men ſignify their ideas and their intentions to each other, *voice* ſoon aſſumed a great many other meanings, all derived from this primary effect. "To give our voice" for any thing, ſignified, to give our ſentiment in favour of it. Not only ſo; but *voice* was transferred to ſignify any intimation of will or judgment, though given without the leaſt interpoſition of voice in its literal ſenſe, or any ſound uttered at all. Thus we ſpeak of liſtening to the *voice* of Conſcience, the *voice* of Nature, the *voice* of God. This uſage takes place, not ſo much from barrenneſs of Language, or want of a proper word, as from an alluſion which we chooſe to make to *voice*, in its primary ſenſe, in order to convey our idea, connected with a circumſtance which appears to the fancy to give it more ſprightlineſs and force.

The account which I have now given, and which ſeems to be a full and fair one, of the introduction of Tropes into all Languages, coincides with what Cicero briefly hints, in his third book, De Oratore. "Modus transferendi verba late patet; "quam neceſſitas primum genuit, coacta inopia et anguſtiis; "poſt autem delectatio, jucunditaſque celebravit. Nam ut "veſtis, frigoris depellendi cauſa reperta primo, poſt adhiberi "cæpta eſt ad ornatum etiam corporis et dignitatem, ſic verbi "tranſlatio inſtituta eſt inopiæ cauſâ, frequentata, delectationis."*

From

* "The Figurative uſage of words is very extenſive; an uſage to which "neceſſity firſt gave riſe, on account of the paucity of words, and barrenneſs "of Language; but which the pleaſure that was found in it afterwards ren"dered frequent. For, as garments were firſt contrived to defend our bodies "from the cold, and afterwards were employed for the purpoſe of ornament "and dignity, ſo Figures of Speech, introduced by want, were cultivated for "the ſake of entertainment."

From what has been ſaid, it clearly appears, how that muſt come to paſs, which I had occaſion to mention in a former Lecture, that all Languages are moſt Figurative in their early ſtate. Both the cauſes to which I aſcribed the Origin of Figures, concur in producing this effect at the beginnings of ſociety. Language is then moſt barren; the ſtock of proper names which have been invented for things, is ſmall; and, at the ſame time, imagination exerts great influence over the conceptions of men, and their method of uttering them; ſo that, both from neceſſity and from choice, their Speech will, at that period, abound in Tropes. For the ſavage tribes of men are always much given to wonder and aſtoniſhment. Every new object ſurpriſes, terrifies, and makes a ſtrong impreſſion on their mind; they are governed by imagination and paſſion, more than by reaſon; and, of courſe, their Speech muſt be deeply tinctured by their genius. In fact, we find, that this is the character of the American and Indian Languages; bold, picturesque, and metaphorical; full of ſtrong alluſions to ſenſible qualities, and to ſuch objects as ſtruck them moſt in their wild and ſolitary life. An Indian chief makes a harangue to his tribe, in a ſtyle full of ſtronger metaphors than an European would uſe in an epic poem.

As Language makes gradual progreſs towards refinement, almoſt every object comes to have a proper name given to it, and Perſpicuity and Preciſion are more ſtudied. But ſtill, for the reaſons before given, borrowed words, or as rhetoricians call them, Tropes, muſt continue to occupy a conſiderable place. In every Language, too, there are a multitude of words, which, though they were Figurative in their firſt application to certain objects, yet, by long uſe, loſe that Figurative power wholly, and come to be conſidered as ſimple and literal expreſſions. In this caſe, are the terms which I remarked before, as transferred from ſenſible qualities to the operations or qualities of the mind, a *piercing* judgment, a *clear* head, a *hard* heart, and the like. There are other words which remain in a ſort of middle ſtate; which have neither loſt wholly their figurative application, nor yet retain ſo much of it, as to imprint any remarkable character of figured Language on our ſtyle; ſuch as theſe phraſes, "apprehend one's meaning:" "enter

on

"on a ſubject;" "follow out an argument;" "ſtir up ſtrife;" and a great many more, of which our Language is full. In the uſe of ſuch phraſes, correct writers will always preſerve a regard to the Figure or alluſion on which they are founded, and will be careful not to apply them in any way that is inconſiſtent with it. One may be "ſheltered under the patronage of a "great man;" but it were wrong to ſay, "ſheltered under the "maſque of diſſimulation," as a maſque conceals, but does not ſhelter. An object, in deſcription, may be "clothed" if you will, "with epithets;" but it is not ſo proper to ſpeak of its being "clothed with circumſtances;" as the word "circum-"ſtances," alludes to ſtanding round, not to clothing. Such attentions as theſe are requiſite in the common run of ſtyle.

What has been ſaid on this ſubject, tends to throw light on the nature of Language in general, and will lead to the reaſons, Why Tropes and Figures contribute to the beauty and grace of ſtyle.

Firſt, They enrich Language, and render it more copious. By their means, words and phraſes are multiplied for expreſſing all ſorts of ideas; for deſcribing even the minuteſt differences; the niceſt ſhades and colours of thought; which no Language could poſſibly do by proper words alone, without aſſiſtance from Tropes.

Secondly, They beſtow dignity upon Style. The familiarity of common words, to which our ears are much accuſtomed, tends to degrade Style. When we want to adapt our Language to the tone of an elevated ſubject, we would be greatly at a loſs, if we could not borrow aſſiſtance from Figures; which, properly employed, have a ſimilar effect on Language, with what is produced by the rich and ſplendid dreſs of a perſon of rank; to create reſpect, and to give an air of magnificence to him who wears it. Aſſiſtance of this kind, is often needed in proſe compoſitions; but poetry could not ſubſiſt without it. Hence Figures form the conſtant Language of poetry. To ſay, that "the ſun riſes," is trite and common; but it becomes a magnificent image when expreſſed, as Mr. Thomſon has done:

> But yonder comes the powerful king of day
> Rejoicing in the eaſt. ———

To ſay, that "all men are ſubject alike to death," preſents only a vulgar idea; but it riſes and fills the imagination, when painted thus by Horace:

Pallida mors æquo pulſat pede, pauperum tabernas
Regumque turres.

Or,

Omnes eodem cogimur; omnium
Verſatur urna, ſerius, ocyus,
Sors exitura, & nos in eternum
Exilium impoſitura cymbæ.*

In the third place, Figures give us the pleaſure of enjoying two objects preſented together to our view, without confuſion; the principal idea, which is the ſubject of the diſcourſe, along with its acceſſory, which gives it the Figurative dreſs. We ſee one thing in another, as Ariſtotle expreſſes it; which is always agreeable to the mind. For there is nothing with which the fancy is more delighted, than with compariſons, and reſemblances of objects; and all Tropes are founded upon ſome relation or analogy between one thing and another. When, for inſtance, in place of "youth," I ſay, the "morning of life;" the fancy is immediately entertained with all the reſembling circumſtances which preſently occur between theſe two objects. At one moment, I have in my eye a certain period of human life, and a certain time of the day, ſo related to each other, that the imagination plays between them with pleaſure, and contemplates two ſimilar objects, in one view, without embarraſſment or confuſion. Not only ſo, but,

In the fourth place, Figures are attended with this farther advantage, of giving us frequently a much clearer and more ſtriking view of the principal object, than we could have if it were expreſſed in ſimple terms, and diveſted of its acceſſory idea. This is, indeed, their principal advantage, in virtue of which, they are very properly ſaid to illuſtrate a ſubject, or to throw light upon it. For they exhibit the object, on which they are employed, in a pictureſque form; they can render an abſtract conception,

* With equal pace, impartial fate
Knocks at the palace, as the cottage gate.

Or,

We all muſt tread the paths of fate;
And ever ſhakes the mortal urn;
Whoſe lot embarks us, ſoon or late,
On Charon's boat; ah! never to return. FRANCIS.

conception, in ſome degree, an object of ſenſe; they ſurround it with ſuch circumſtances, as enable the mind to lay hold of it ſteadily, and to contemplate it fully. "Thoſe perſons," ſays one, "who gain the hearts of moſt people, who are choſen as "the companions of their ſofter hours, and their reliefs from "anxiety and care, are ſeldom perſons of ſhining qualities, or "ſtrong virtues: it is rather the ſoft green of the ſoul, on "which we reſt our eyes, that are fatigued with beholding "more glaring objects." Here, by a happy alluſion to a colour, the whole conception is conveyed clear and ſtrong to the mind in one word. By a well choſen Figure, even conviction is aſſiſted, and the impreſſion of a truth upon the mind, made more lively and forcible than it would otherwiſe be. As in the following illuſtration of Dr. Young's: "When we dip too deep "in pleaſure, we always ſtir a ſediment that renders it impure "and noxious;" or in this, "A heart boiling with violent "paſſions, will always ſend up infatuating fumes to the head." An image that preſents ſo much congruity between a moral and a ſenſible idea, ſerves like an argument from analogy, to enforce what the author aſſerts, and to induce belief.

Beſides, whether we are endeavouring to raiſe ſentiments of pleaſure or averſion, we can always heighten the emotion by the Figures which we introduce; leading the imagination to a train, either of agreeable or diſagreeable, of exalting or debaſing ideas, correſpondent to the impreſſion which we ſeek to make. When we want to render an object beautiful, or magnificent, we borrow images from all the moſt beautiful or ſplendid ſcenes of nature; we thereby naturally throw a luſtre over our object; we enliven the reader's mind; and diſpoſe him to go along with us, in the gay and pleaſing impreſſions which we give him of the ſubject. This effect of Figures is happily touched in the following lines of Dr. Akenſide, and illuſtrated by a very ſublime Figure:

——————Then th' inexpreſſive ſtrain,
Diffuſes its enchantment. Fancy dreams
Of ſacred fountains and Elyſian groves,
And vales of bliſs. The intellectual power
Bends from his awful throne a wond'ring ear,
And ſmiles.——————

Pleaſ. of Imaginat. I. 124.

What

What I have now explained, concerning the uſe and effects of Figures, naturally leads us to reflect on the wonderful power of Language; and, indeed, we cannot reflect on it without the higheſt admiration. What a fine vehicle is it now become for all the conceptions of the human mind; even for the moſt ſubtile and delicate workings of the imagination! What a pliant and flexible inſtrument in the hand of one who can employ it ſkilfully; prepared to take every form which he chooſes to give it! Not content with a ſimple communication of ideas and thoughts, it paints thoſe ideas to the eye; it gives colouring and relievo, even to the moſt abſtract conceptions. In the Figures which it uſes, it ſets mirrors before us, where we may behold objects, a ſecond time, in their likeneſs. It entertains us, as with a ſucceſſion of the moſt ſplendid pictures; diſpoſes, in the moſt artificial manner, of the light and ſhade, for viewing every thing to the beſt advantage; in fine, from being a rude and imperfect interpreter of men's wants and neceſſities, it has now paſſed into an inſtrument of the moſt delicate and refined luxury.

To make theſe effects of Figurative Language ſenſible, there are few authors in the Engliſh Language, whom I can refer to with more advantage than Mr. Addiſon, whoſe imagination is, at once, remarkably rich, and remarkably correct and chaſte. When he is treating, for inſtance, of the effect which light and colours have to entertain the fancy, conſidered in Mr. Locke's view of them as ſecondary qualities, which have no real exiſtence in matter, but are only ideas in the mind, with what beautiful painting has he adorned this philoſophic ſpeculation? "Things," ſays he, "would make but a poor appearance to "the eye, if we ſaw them only in their proper Figures and "motions. Now, we are every where entertained with pleaſ-"ing ſhows and apparitions; we diſcover imaginary glories in "the heavens, and in the earth, and ſee ſome of this viſionary "beauty poured out upon the whole creation. But what a "rough unſightly ſketch of nature ſhould we be entertained "with, did all her colouring diſappear, and the ſeveral diſ-"tinctions of light and ſhade vaniſh? In ſhort, our ſouls are, "at preſent, delightfully loſt, and bewildered in a pleaſing de-"luſion: and we walk about like the enchanted hero of a ro-"mance, who ſees beautiful caſtles, woods, and meadows;

"and,

"and, at the same time, hears the warbling of birds, and the "purling of streams; but, upon the finishing of some secret "spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, and the disconsolate "knight finds himself on a barren heath, or in a solitary desert. "It is not improbable, that something like this may be the "state of the soul after its first separation, in respect of the "images it will receive from matter." No. 413, Spectator.

Having thus explained, at sufficient length, the Origin, the Nature, and the Effects of Tropes, I should proceed next to the several kinds and divisions of them. But, in treating of these, were I to follow the common track of the scholastic writers on rhetoric, I should soon become tedious, and, I apprehend, useless, at the same time. Their great business has been, with a most patient and frivolous industry, to branch them out under a vast number of divisions, according to all the several modes in which a word may be carried from its literal meaning, into one that is Figurative, without doing any more; as if the mere knowledge of the names and classes of all the Tropes that can be formed, could be of any advantage towards the proper, or graceful use of Language. All that I purpose is, to give, in a few words, before finishing this Lecture, a general view of the several sources whence the tropical meaning of words is derived: after which I shall, in subsequent Lectures, descend to a more particular consideration of some of the most considerable Figures of Speech, and such as are in most frequent use; by treating of which, I shall give all the instruction I can, concerning the proper employment of Figurative Language, and point out the errors and abuses which are apt to be committed in this part of style.

All Tropes, as I before observed, are founded on the relation which one object bears to another; in virtue of which, the name of the one can be substituted instead of the name of the other, and by such a substitution, the vivacity of the idea is commonly meant to be increased. These relations, some more, some less intimate, may all give rise to Tropes. One of the first and most obvious relations is, that between a cause and its effect. Hence, in Figurative Language, the cause is, sometimes, put for the effect. Thus, Mr. Addison, writing of Italy:

> Blossoms, and fruits, and flowers, together rise,
> And the whole year in gay confusion lies.

Where

Where the "whole year" is plainly intended, to ſignify the effects or productions of all the ſeaſons of the year. At other times, again, the effect is put for the cauſe; as, "grey hairs" frequently for old age, which cauſes grey hairs; and "ſhade," for trees that produce the ſhade. The relation between the container and the thing contained, is alſo ſo intimate and obvious, as naturally to give riſe to Tropes:

——————Ille impiger hauſit
Spumantem pateram & pleno ſe proluit auro.

Where every one ſees, that the cup and the gold are put for the liquor that was contained in the golden cup. In the ſame manner, the name of any country, is often uſed to denote the inhabitants of that country; and Heaven, very commonly employed to ſignify God, becauſe he is conceived as dwelling in heaven. To implore the aſſiſtance of Heaven, is the ſame as to implore the aſſiſtance of God. The relation betwixt any eſtabliſhed ſign and the thing ſignified, is a further ſource of Tropes. Hence,

Cedant arma togæ; concedat laurea linguæ.

The "toga," being the badge of the civil profeſſions, and the "laurel," of military honours, the badge of each is put for the civil and military characters themſelves. To "aſſume the "ſceptre," is a common phraſe for entering on royal authority. To Tropes, founded on theſe ſeveral relations, of cauſe and effect, container and contained, ſign and thing ſignified, is given the name of Metonymy.

When the Trope is founded on the relation between an antecedent and a conſequent, or what goes before, and immediately follows after, it is then called a Metalepſis; as in the Roman phraſe of "Fuit," or "Vixit," to expreſs that one was dead. "Fuit Ilium et ingens gloria Dardanidum," ſignifies, that the glory of Troy is now no more.

When the whole is put for a part, or a part for the whole; a genus for a ſpecies, or a ſpecies for a genus; the ſingular for the plural, or the plural for the ſingular number; in general, when any thing leſs, or any thing more, is put for the preciſe object meant; the Figure is then called a Synecdoche. It is very

very common, for inſtance, to deſcribe a whole object by ſome remarkable part of it; as when we ſay, "A fleet of ſo many "ſail," in the place of "ſhips;" when we uſe the "head" for the "perſon," the "pole" for the "earth," the "waves" for the "ſea." In like manner, an attribute may be put for a ſubject; as, "youth and beauty," for "the young and beautiful;" and ſometimes a ſubject for the attribute. But it is needleſs to inſiſt longer on this enumeration, which ſerves little purpoſe. I have ſaid enough, to give an opening into that great variety of relations between objects, by means of which, the mind is aſſiſted to paſs eaſily from one to another; and, by the name of the one, underſtands the other to be meant. It it always ſome acceſſory idea, which recals the principal to the imagination; and commonly recals it with more force, than if the principal idea had been expreſſed.

The relation which, of all others, is by far the moſt fruitful of Tropes, I have not yet mentioned; that is, the relation of Similitude and Reſemblance. On this is founded what is called the Metaphor: when, in place of uſing the proper name of any object, we employ, in its place, the name of ſome other which is like it; which is a ſort of picture of it, and which thereby awakens the conception of it with more force or grace. This figure is more frequent than all the reſt put together; and the language, both of proſe and verſe, owes to it much of its elegance and grace. This, therefore, deſerves very full and particular conſideration; and ſhall be the ſubject of the next Lecture.

LECTURE

LECTURE XV.

METAPHOR.

AFTER the preliminary obſervations I have made, relating to Figurative Language in general, I come now to treat ſeparately of ſuch figures of ſpeech, as occur moſt frequently, and require particular attention: and I begin with Metaphor. This is a figure founded entirely on the reſemblance which one object bears to another. Hence, it is much allied to ſimile, or compariſon; and is indeed no other than a compariſon, expreſſed in an abridged form. When I ſay of ſome great miniſter, "that he upholds the ſtate, like a pillar "which ſupports the weight of a whole edifice," I fairly make a compariſon; but when I ſay of ſuch a miniſter, "that he is "the pillar of the ſtate," it is now become a Metaphor. The compariſon betwixt the miniſter and a pillar, is made in the mind; but is expreſſed without any of the words that denote compariſon. The compariſon is only inſinuated, not expreſſed: the one object is ſuppoſed to be ſo like the other, that, without formally drawing the compariſon, the name of the one may be put in the place of the name of the other. "The miniſter is "the pillar of the ſtate." This, therefore, is a more lively and animated manner of expreſſing the reſemblances which imagination traces among objects. There is nothing which delights the fancy more, than this act of comparing things together, diſcovering reſemblances between them, and deſcribing them by their likeneſs. The mind thus employed, is exerciſed without being fatigued; and is gratified with the conſciouſneſs of its own ingenuity. We need not be ſurpriſed, therefore, at finding all language ſtrongly tinctured with Metaphor. It inſinuates even into familiar converſation; and, unſought, riſes up of its own accord in the mind. The very words which I have caſually employed in deſcribing this, are a proof of what I ſay;

tinctured,

tinctured, inſinuates, riſes up, are all of them metaphorical expreſſions, borrowed from ſome reſemblance which fancy forms between ſenſible objects, and the internal operations of the mind; and yet the terms are no leſs clear, and, perhaps, more expreſſive, than if words had been uſed, which were to be taken in the ſtrict and literal ſenſe.

Though all Metaphor imports compariſon, and, therefore, is, in that reſpect, a figure of thought; yet, as the words in a Metaphor are not taken literally, but changed from their proper to a figurative ſenſe, the Metaphor is commonly ranked among tropes or figures of words. But, provided the nature of it be well underſtood, it ſignifies very little whether we call it a figure or a trope. I have confined it to the expreſſion of reſemblance between two objects. I muſt remark, however, that the word Metaphor is ſometimes uſed in a looſer and more extended ſenſe; for the application of a term in any figurative ſignification, whether the figure be founded on reſemblance, or on ſome other relation, which two objects bear to one another. For inſtance; when grey hairs are put for old age; as, "to bring one's grey hairs with ſorrow to the "grave;" ſome writers would call this a Metaphor, though it is not properly one, but what rhetoricians call a metonymy; that is, the effect put for the cauſe; "grey hairs" being the effect of old age, but not bearing any ſort of reſemblance to it. Ariſtotle, in his Poetics, uſes Metaphor in this extended ſenſe, for any figurative meaning impoſed upon a word; as a whole put for the part, or a part for the whole; a ſpecies for the genus, or a genus for the ſpecies. But it would be unjuſt to tax this moſt acute writer with any inaccuracy on this account; the minute ſubdiviſions, and various names of tropes, being unknown in his days, and the invention of later rhetoricians. Now, however, when theſe diviſions are eſtabliſhed, it is inaccurate to call every figurative uſe of terms, promiſcuouſly, a Metaphor.

Of all the figures of Speech, none comes ſo near to painting as Metaphor. Its peculiar effect is to give light and ſtrength to deſcription; to make intellectual ideas, in ſome ſort, viſible to the eye, by giving them colour, and ſubſtance, and ſenſible qualities. In order to produce this effect, however, a delicate hand

is required; for, by a very little inaccuracy, we are in hazard of introducing confusion, in place of promoting perspicuity. Several rules, therefore, are necessary to be given for the proper management of Metaphors. But, before entering on these, I shall give one instance of a very beautiful Metaphor, that I may show the figure to full advantage. I shall take my instance from Lord Bolingbroke's Remarks on the History of England. Just at the conclusion of his work, he is speaking of the behaviour of Charles I. to his last parliament: "In a word," says he, "about a month after their meeting, he dissolved them; and, "as soon as he had dissolved them, he repented; but he repented too late of his rashness. Well might he repent; for the "vessel was now full, and this last drop made the waters of "bitterness overflow." "Here," he adds, "we draw the curtain, and put an end to our remarks." Nothing could be more happily thrown off. The Metaphor, we see, is continued through several expressions. The *vessel* is put for the state, or temper of the nation already *full*, that is, provoked to the highest by former oppressions and wrongs; this *last drop*, stands for the provocation recently received by the abrupt dissolution of the parliament; and the *overflowing of the waters of bitterness*, beautifully expresses all the effects of resentment let loose by an exasperated people.

On this passage, we may make two remarks in passing. The one, that nothing forms a more spirited and dignified conclusion of a subject, than a figure of this kind happily placed at the close. We see the effect of it, in this instance. The author goes off with a good grace; and leaves a strong and full impression of his subject on the reader's mind. My other remark is, the advantage which a Metaphor frequently has above a formal comparison. How much would the sentiment here have been enfeebled, if it had been expressed in the style of a regular simile, thus: "Well "might he repent; for the state of the nation, loaded with "grievances and provocations, resembled a vessel that was now "full, and this superadded provocation, like the last drop infused, "made their rage and resentment, as waters of bitterness, overflow." It has infinitely more spirit and force as it now stands, in the form of a Metaphor. "Well might he repent; for the "vessel was now full; and this last drop made the waters of bitterness overflow."

Having

Having mentioned, with applauſe, this inſtance from Lord Bolingbroke, I think it incumbent on me here to take notice, that, though I may have recourſe to this author, ſometimes, for examples of ſtyle, it is his ſtyle only, and not his ſentiments, that deſerve praiſe. It is indeed my opinion, that there are few writings in the Engliſh Language, which, for the matter contained in them, can be read with leſs profit or fruit, than Lord Bolingbroke's works. His political writings have the merit of a very lively and eloquent ſtyle; but they have no other; being, as to the ſubſtance, the mere temporary productions of faction and party; no better, indeed, than pamphlets written for the day. His Poſthumous, or, as they are called, his Philoſophical Works, wherein he attacks religion, have ſtill leſs merit; for they are as looſe in the ſtyle as they are flimſy in the reaſoning. An unhappy inſtance, this author is, of parts and genius ſo miſerably perverted by faction and paſſion, that, as his memory will deſcend to poſterity with little honour, ſo his productions will ſoon paſs, and are, indeed, already paſſing into neglect and oblivion.

Returning from this digreſſion to the ſubject before us, I proceed to lay down the rules to be obſerved in the conduct of Metaphors; and which are much the ſame for tropes of every kind.

The firſt that I ſhall mention, is, that they be ſuited to the nature of the ſubject of which we treat; neither too many, nor too gay, nor too elevated for it; that we neither attempt to force the ſubject, by means of them, into a degree of elevation which is not congruous to it; nor, on the other hand, allow it to ſink below its proper dignity. This is a direction which belongs to all Figurative Language, and ſhould be ever kept in view. Some Metaphors are allowable, nay, beautiful, in poetry, which it would be abſurd and unnatural to employ in proſe; ſome may be graceful in orations, which would be very improper in hiſtorical, or philoſophical compoſition. We muſt remember, that figures are the dreſs of our ſentiments. As there is a natural congruity between dreſs, and the character or rank of the perſon who wears it, a violation of which congruity never fails to hurt; the ſame holds preciſely as to the application of figures to ſentiment. The exceſſive, or unſeaſonable employment of them, is mere foppery in writing.

It

It gives a boyiſh air to compoſition; and, inſtead of raiſing a ſubject, in fact, diminiſhes its dignity. For, as in life, true dignity muſt be founded on character, not on dreſs and appearance, ſo the dignity of compoſition muſt ariſe from ſentiment and thought, not from ornament. The affectation and parade of ornament, detract as much from an author, as they do from a man. Figures and Metaphors, therefore, ſhould, on no occaſion, be ſtuck on too profuſely; and never ſhould be ſuch as refuſe to accord with the ſtrain of our ſentiment. Nothing can be more unnatural, than for a writer to carry on a train of reaſoning, in the ſame ſort of Figurative Language, which he would uſe in deſcription. When he reaſons, we look only for perſpicuity; when he deſcribes, we expect embelliſhment; when he divides, or relates, we deſire plainneſs and ſimplicity. One of the greateſt ſecrets in compoſition is, to know when to be ſimple. This always gives a heightening to ornament, in its proper place. The right diſpoſition of the ſhade, makes the light and colouring ſtrike the more: "Is enim eſt eloquens," ſays Cicero, "qui et humilia ſubtiliter, et magna graviter, et "mediocria temperatè poteſt dicere. Nam qui nihil poteſt "tranquillè, nihil leniter, nihil definitè, diſtinctè, poteſt dicere, "is, cum non præparatis auribus inflammare rem cæpit, furere "apud ſanos, et quaſi inter ſobrios bacchari temulentus videtur."* This admonition ſhould be particularly attended to by young practitioners in the art of writing, who are apt to be carried away by an undiſtinguiſhing admiration of what is ſhowy and florid, whether in its place or not.† The

* "He is truly eloquent, who can diſcourſe of humble ſubjects in a plain "ſtyle, who can treat important ones with dignity, and ſpeak of things, which "are of a middle nature, in a temperate ſtrain. For one who, upon no oc"caſion, can expreſs himſelf in a calm, orderly, diſtinct manner, when he be"gins to be on fire before his readers are prepared to kindle along with him, "has the appearance of raving like a madman among perſons who are in their "ſenſes, or of reeling like a drunkard in the midſt of ſober company."

† What perſon of the leaſt taſte, can bear the following paſſage, in a late hiſtorian. He is giving an account of the famous act of parliament againſt irregular marriages in England: "The bill," ſays he, "underwent a great "number of alterations and amendments, which were not effected without vi"olent conteſt." This is plain Language, ſuited to the ſubject; and we naturally expect, that he ſhould go on in the ſame ſtrain, to tell us, that, after theſe conteſts, it was carried by a great majority of voices, and obtained the royal aſſent. But how does he expreſs himſelf in finiſhing the period? "At "length, however, it was floated through both houſes, on the tide of a great "majority, and ſteered into the ſafe harbour of royal approbation." Nothing can be more puerile than ſuch Language. Smollet's Hiſtory of England, as quoted in Critical Review for Oct. 1761, p. 251.

The ſecond rule, which I give, reſpects the choice of objects, from whence Metaphors, and other figures, are to be drawn. The field for Figurative Language is very wide. All nature, to ſpeak in the ſtyle of figures, opens its ſtores to us, and admits us to gather, from all ſenſible objects, whatever can illuſtrate intellectual or moral ideas. Not only the gay and ſplendid objects of ſenſe, but the grave, the terrifying, and even the gloomy and diſmal, may, on different occaſions, be introduced into figures with propriety. But we muſt beware of ever uſing ſuch alluſions as raiſe in the mind diſagreeable, mean, vulgar, or dirty ideas. Even when Metaphors are choſen in order to vilify and degrade any object, an author ſhould ſtudy never to be nauſeous in his alluſions. Cicero blames an orator of his time, for terming his enemy "Stercus Curiæ;" "quamvis ſit "ſimile," ſays he, "tamen eſt deformis cogitatio ſimilitudinis." But, in ſubjects of dignity, it is an unpardonable fault to introduce mean and vulgar Metaphors. In the treatiſe on the Art of Sinking, in Dean Swift's works, there is a full and humorous collection of inſtances of this kind, wherein authors, inſtead of exalting, have contrived to degrade, their ſubjects by the figures they employed. Authors of greater note than thoſe which are there quoted, have, at times, fallen into this error. Archbiſhop Tillotſon, for inſtance, is ſometimes negligent in his choice of Metaphors; as, when ſpeaking of the day of judgment, he deſcribes the world, as "cracking about the ſinners' "ears." Shakeſpeare, whoſe imagination was rich and bold, in a much greater degree than it was delicate, often fails here. The following, for example, is a groſs tranſgreſſion; in his Henry V. having mentioned a dunghill, he preſently raiſes a Metaphor from the ſteam of it; and on a ſubject too, that naturally led to much nobler ideas:

> And thoſe that leave their valiant bones in France,
> Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
> They ſhall be fam'd; for there the ſun ſhall greet them,
> And draw their honours reeking up to heaven.
>
> Act IV. Sc. 8.

In the third place, as Metaphors ſhould be drawn from objects of ſome dignity, ſo particular care ſhould be taken that the reſemblance, which is the foundation of the Metaphor, be clear and perſpicuous, not far fetched, nor difficult to diſcover. The

tranſgreſſion

tranſgreſſion of this rule makes, what are called harſh or forced Metaphors, which are always diſpleaſing, becauſe they puzzle the reader, and, inſtead of illuſtrating the thought, render it perplexed and intricate. With Metaphors of this kind, Cowley abounds. He, and ſome of the writers of his age, ſeem to have conſidered it as the perfection of wit, to hit upon likeneſſes between objects which no other perſon could have diſcovered; and, at the ſame time, to purſue thoſe Metaphors ſo far, that it requires ſome ingenuity to follow them out and comprehend them. This makes a Metaphor reſemble an ænigma; and is the very reverſe of Cicero's rule on this head: "Verecunda "debet eſſe tranſlatio; ut deducta eſſe in alienum locum non "irruiſſe, atque ut voluntario non vi veniſſe videatur."* How forced and obſcure, for inſtance, are the following verſes of Cowley, ſpeaking of his miſtreſs:

Woe to her ſtubborn heart, if once mine come
Into the ſelf-ſame room,
'Twill tear and blow up all within,
Like a granado, ſhot into a magazine.
Then ſhall love keep the aſhes and torn parts
Of both our broken hearts;
Shall out of both one new one make;
From her's th' alloy, from mine the metal take;
For of her heart, he from the flames will find
But little left behind;
Mine only will remain entire,
No droſs was there, to periſh in the fire.

In this manner he addreſſes ſleep:

In vain, thou drowſy god, I thee invoke;
For thou, who doſt from fumes ariſe,
Thou, who man's ſoul doſt overſhade,
With a thick cloud by vapours made;
Canſt have no power to ſhut his eyes,
Whoſe flame's ſo pure, that it ſends up no ſmoke;
Yet how do tears but from ſome vapours riſe?
Tears that bewinter all my year;
The fate of Egypt I ſuſtain,
And never feel the dew of rain,
From clouds which in the head appear;
But all my too much moiſture owe
To overflowings of the heart below.†

Trite

* "Every Metaphor ſhould be modeſt, ſo that it may carry the appearance "of having been led, not of having forced itſelf into the place of that word "whoſe room it occupies; that it may ſeem to have come thither of its own "accord, and not by conſtraint." De Oratore, L. III. c. 53.

† See an excellent criticiſm on this ſort of metaphyſical poetry, in Dr. Johnſon's Life of Cowley.

Trite and common resemblances should indeed be avoided in our Metaphors. To be new, and not vulgar, is a beauty. But when they are fetched from some likeness too remote, and lying too far out of the road of ordinary thought, then, besides their obscurity, they have also the disadvantage of appearing laboured, and, as the French call it, "recherché:" whereas Metaphor, like every other ornament, loses its whole grace, when it does not seem natural and easy.

It is but a bad and ungraceful softening which writers sometimes use for a harsh Metaphor, when they palliate it with the expression, *as it were*. This is but an awkward parenthesis; and Metaphors, which need this apology of an *as it were*, had, generally, be better omitted. Metaphors, too, borrowed from any of the sciences, especially such of them as belong to particular professions, are almost always faulty by their obscurity.

In the fourth place, it must be carefully attended to, in the conduct of Metaphors, never to jumble metaphorical and plain Language together; never to construct a period so, that part of it must be understood metaphorically, part literally; which always produces a most disagreeable confusion. Instances, which are but too frequent, even in good authors, will make this rule, and the reason of it, be clearly understood. In Mr. Pope's translation of the Odyssey, Penelope, bewailing the abrupt departure of her son Telemachus, is made to speak thus:

> Long to my joys my dearest lord is lost,
> His country's buckler, and the Grecian boast;
> Now from my fond embrace by tempests torn,
> Our other column of the state is borne,
> Nor took a kind adieu, nor sought consent.* IV. 962.

Here, in one line, her son is figured as a column; and in the next, he returns to be a person, to whom it belongs to take adieu, and to ask consent. This is inconsistent. The poet should either have kept himself to the idea of a man, in the literal sense; or, if he figured him by a column, he should have ascribed

* In the original, there is no allusion to a column, and the Metaphor is rightly supported:

> Ἦ πριν μεν ποσιν ἐσθλον απώλεσα θυμολεοντα
> Παντοιης ἀρετῆσι κεκασμενον ἐν Δαναοισι
> Εσθλον, τὸ κλεος ἐυρυ καθ' Ἑλλαδα και μεσον Ἀργος·
> Νυν δ' αυ παιδ' ἀγαπητον ανηρειψαντο θυελλαι
> Ἀκλεα ἐκ μεγαρων, ὐδ' ὀρμηθεντος ακουσα. Δ. 24.

aſcribed nothing to him, but what belonged to it. He was not at liberty to aſcribe to that column the actions and properties of a man. Such unnatural mixtures render the image indiſtinct; leaving it to waver, in our conception, between the figurative and the literal ſenſe. Horace's rule, which he applies to characters, ſhould be obſerved by all writers who deal in Figures:

——Servetur ad imum,
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, et ſibi conſtet.

Mr. Pope, elſewhere, addreſſing himſelf to the king, ſays,

To thee the world its preſent homage pays,
The harveſt early, but mature the praiſe.

This, though not ſo groſs, is a fault, however, of the ſame kind. It is plain, that, had not the rhyme miſled him to the choice of an improper phraſe, he would have ſaid,

The harveſt early, but mature the crop:

And ſo would have continued the figure which he had begun. Whereas, by dropping it unfiniſhed, and by employing the literal word, *praiſe*, when we were expecting ſomething that related to the harveſt, the figure is broken, and the two members of the ſentence have no proper correſpondence with each other:

The *harveſt* early, but mature the *praiſe*.

The works of Oſſian abound with beautiful and correct Metaphors; ſuch as that on a hero: "In peace, thou art the gate "of ſpring; in war, the mountain ſtorm." Or this, on a woman: "She was covered with the light of beauty; but her "heart was the houſe of pride." They afford, however, one inſtance of the fault we are now cenſuring: "Trothal went "forth with the ſtream of his people, but they met a rock: for "Fingal ſtood unmoved; broken, they rolled back from his ſide. "Nor did they roll in ſafety; the ſpear of the king purſued "their flight." At the beginning, the Metaphor is very beautiful. The ſtream, the unmoved rock, the waves rolling back broken, are expreſſions employed in the proper and conſiſtent Language of Figure; but, in the end, when we are told, "they "did not roll in ſafety, becauſe the ſpear of the king purſued "their

"their flight," the literal meaning is improperly mixed with the Metaphor: they are, at one and the ſame time, preſented to us as *waves* that *roll*, and men that may be *purſued* and *wounded with a ſpear*. If it be faulty to jumble together, in this manner, metaphorical and plain Language, it is ſtill more ſo,

In the fifth place, to make two different Metaphors meet, on one object. This is what is called mixed Metaphor, and is indeed one of the groſſeſt abuſes of this Figure; ſuch as Shakeſpeare's expreſſion, "to take arms againſt a ſea of troubles." This makes a moſt unnatural medley, and confounds the imagination entirely. Quintilian has ſufficiently guarded us againſt it. "Id imprimis eſt cuſtodiendum, ut quo genere cœperis "tranſlationis, hoc finias. Multi autem cum initium a tem-"peſtate ſumſerunt, incendio aut runia finiunt; quæ eſt in-"conſequentia rerum fœdiſſima."* Obſerve, for inſtance, what an inconſiſtent group of objects is brought together by Shakeſpeare, in the following paſſage of the Tempeſt; ſpeaking of perſons recovering their judgment after the enchantment, which held them, was diſſolved:

> ———The charm diſſolves apace,
> And as the morning ſteals upon the night
> Melting the darkneſs, ſo their riſing ſenſes
> Begin to chaſe the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reaſon.———

So many ill-ſorted things are here joined, that the mind can ſee nothing clearly; the morning *ſtealing* upon the darkneſs, and at the ſame time *melting* it; the ſenſes of men *chaſing fumes*, *ignorant fumes*, and *fumes* that *mantle*. So again in Romeo and Juliet:

> ——————— as glorious,
> As is a winged meſſenger from heaven,
> Unto the white upturned wondering eyes
> Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
> When he beſtrides the lazy pacing clouds,
> And ſails upon the boſom of the air.

Here, the angel is repreſented, as, at one moment, *beſtriding* the clouds, and *ſailing* upon the air; and upon the *boſom* of the

* "We muſt be particularly attentive to end with the ſame kind of Meta-"phor with which we have begun. Some, when they begin the figure with "a Tempeſt, conclude it with a conflagration; which forms a ſhameful in-"conſiſtency."

air too; which forms ſuch a confuſed picture, that it is impoſſible for any imagination to comprehend it.

More correct writers than Shakeſpeare, ſometimes fall into this error of mixing Metaphors. It is ſurpriſing how the following inaccuracy ſhould have eſcaped Mr. Addiſon, in his Letter from Italy:

> I bridle in my ſtruggling muſe with pain,
> That longs to launch into a bolder ſtrain.*

The muſe, figured as a horſe, may be *bridled*; but when we ſpeak of *launching*, we make it a ſhip; and, by no force of imagination, can it be ſuppoſed both a horſe and a ſhip at one moment; *bridled*, to hinder it from *launching*. The ſame author, in one of his numbers in the Spectator, ſays, "There "is not a ſingle view of human nature, which is not ſufficient "to extinguiſh the ſeeds of pride." Obſerve the incoherence of the things here joined together, making "a view extinguiſh, "and extinguiſh ſeeds."

Horace alſo, is incorrect, in the following paſſage:

> Urit enim fulgore ſuo qui prægravat artes
> Infra ſe poſitas. ————————

Urit qui *prægravat*. He dazzles who bears down with his weight; makes plainly an inconſiſtent mixture of metaphorical ideas. Neither can this other paſſage be altogether vindicated:

> Ah! quantâ laboras in Charybdi,
> Digne puer meliore flammâ!

Where a whirlpool of water, Charybdis, is ſaid to be a flame, not good enough for this young man; meaning that he was unfortunate in the object of his paſſion. Flame is, indeed, become almoſt a literal word for the paſſion of love; but as it ſtill retains, in ſome degree, its figurative power, it ſhould never have been uſed as ſynonimous with water, and mixed with it in the ſame Metaphor. When Mr. Pope (Eloiſa to Abelard) ſays,

> All then is full, poſſeſſing and poſſeſt,
> No craving void left aking in the breaſt;

A *void*

* In my obſervation on this paſſage, I find that I had coincided with Dr. Johnſon, who paſſes a ſimilar cenſure upon it, in his life of Addiſon.

A *void* may, metaphorically, be ſaid to *crave*; but can a void be ſaid to *ake?*

A good rule has been given for examining the propriety of Metaphors, when we doubt whether or not they be of the mixed kind; namely, that we ſhould try to form a picture upon them, and conſider how the parts would agree, and what ſort of figure the whole would preſent, when delineated with a pencil. By this means, we ſhould become ſenſible, whether inconſiſtent circumſtances were mixed, and a monſtrous image thereby produced, as in all thoſe faulty inſtances I have now been giving; or whether the object was, all along, preſented in one natural and conſiſtent point of view.

As Metaphors ought never to be mixed, ſo, in the ſixth place, we ſhould avoid crowding them together on the ſame ſubject. Suppoſing each of the Metaphors to be preſerved diſtinct, yet, if they heaped on one another, they produce a confuſion ſomewhat of the ſame kind with the mixed Metaphor. We may judge of this by the following paſſage from Horace:

Motum ex Metello conſule civicum,
Bellique cauſas, et vitia, et modos,
Ludumque fortunæ, graveſque
Principum amicitias, & arma
Nondum expiatis uncta cruoribus,
Periculoſæ plenum opus aleæ,
Tractas, et incedis per ignes
Suppoſitos cineri doloſo.* Lib. 2. I.

This paſſage, though very poetical, is, however, harſh and obſcure; owing to no other cauſe but this, that three diſtinct Metaphors are crowded together, to deſcribe the difficulty of Pollio's writing a hiſtory of the civil wars. Firſt, "Tractas ar-

ma

* Of warm commotions, wrathful jars,
The growing ſeeds of civil wars;
Of double fortune's cruel games,
The ſpecious means, the private aims,
And fatal friendſhips of the guilty great,
Alas! how fatal to the Roman ſtate!
Of mighty legions late ſubdu'd,
And arms with Latian blood embru'd;
Yet unatton'd (a labour vaſt!
Doubtful the die, and dire the caſt!)
You treat adventurous, and incautious tread
On fires with faithleſs embers overſpread.

FRANCIS.

"ma uncta cruoribus nondum expiatis;" next, "Opus plenum "periculoſæ aleæ;" and then; "Incedis per ignes ſuppoſitos "doloſo cineri." The mind has difficulty in paſſing readily through ſo many different views given it, in quick ſucceſſion, of the ſame object.

The only other rule concerning Metaphors which I ſhall add, in the ſeventh place, is, that they be not too far purſued. If the reſemblance, on which the figure is founded, be long dwelt upon, and carried into all its minute circumſtances, we make an Allegory inſtead of a Metaphor; we tire the reader, who ſoon wearies of this play of fancy; and we render our diſcourſe obſcure. This is called, ſtraining a Metaphor. Cowley deals in this to exceſs; and to this error is owing, in a great meaſure, that intricacy and harſhneſs, in his figurative language, which I before remarked. Lord Shafteſbury is ſometimes guilty of purſuing his Metaphors too far. Fond, to a high degree, of every decoration of ſtyle, when once he had hit upon a figure that pleaſed him, he was extremely loth to part with it. Thus, in his advice to an author, having taken up ſoliloquy, or meditation, under the Metaphor of a proper method of evacuation for an author, he purſues this Metaphor through ſeveral pages, under all the forms "of diſcharging crudities, "throwing off froth and ſcum, bodily operation, taking phyſic, "curing indigeſtion, giving vent to choler, bile, flatulencies, "and tumours;" till at laſt, the idea becomes nauſeous. Dr. Young alſo often treſpaſſes in the ſame way. The merit, however, of this writer, in figurative language, is great, and deſerves to be remarked. No writer, ancient or modern, had a ſtronger imagination than Dr. Young, or one more fertile in figures of every kind. His Metaphors are often new, and often natural and beautiful. But, as his imagination was ſtrong and rich, rather than delicate and correct, he ſometimes gives it too looſe reins. Hence, in his Night Thoughts, there prevails an obſcurity, and a hardneſs in his ſtyle. The Metaphors are frequently too bold, and frequently too far purſued; the reader is dazzled, rather than enlightened; and kept conſtantly on the ſtretch to comprehend, and keep pace with the author. We may obſerve, for inſtance, how the following Metaphor is ſpun out:

Thy

Thy thoughts are vagabonds; all outward bound,
Midſt ſands and rocks, and ſtorms, to cruiſe for pleaſure;
If gain'd, dear bought; and better miſs'd than gain'd.
Fancy and ſenſe, from an infected ſhore,
Thy cargo brings; and peſtilence the prize;
Then ſuch the thirſt, inſatiable thirſt,
By fond indulgence but inflam'd the more,
Fancy ſtill cruiſes, when poor ſenſe is tir'd.

Speaking of old age, he ſays, it ſhould

Walk thoughtful on the ſilent ſolemn ſhore
Of that vaſt ocean, it muſt ſail ſo ſoon;
And put good works on board; and wait the wind
That ſhortly blows us into worlds unknown.

The two firſt lines are uncommonly beautiful; "walk "thoughtful on the ſilent, &c." but when he continues the Metaphor, "to putting good works on board, and waiting the "wind," it plainly becomes ſtrained, and ſinks in dignity. Of all the Engliſh authors, I know none ſo happy in his Metaphors as Mr. Addiſon. His imagination was neither ſo rich nor ſo ſtrong as Dr. Young's; but far more chaſte and delicate. Perſpicuity, natural grace and eaſe, always diſtinguiſh his figures. They are neither harſh nor ſtrained; they never appear to have been ſtudied or ſought after; but ſeem to riſe of their own accord from the ſubject, and conſtantly embelliſh it.

I have now treated fully of the Metaphor, and the rules that ſhould govern it, a part of the doctrine of ſtyle ſo important, that it required particular illuſtration. I have only to add a few words concerning Allegory.

An Allegory may be regarded as a continued Metaphor; as it is the repreſentation of ſome one thing by another that reſembles it, and that is made to ſtand for it. Thus, in Prior's Henry and Emma, Emma in the following allegorical manner deſcribes her conſtancy to Henry:

Did I but purpoſe to embark with thee
On the ſmooth ſurface of a ſummer's ſea,
While gentle zephyrs play with proſperous gales,
And fortune's favour fills the ſwelling ſails;
But would forſake the ſhip, and make the ſhore,
When the winds whiſtle, and the tempeſts roar?

We may take alſo from the ſcriptures a very fine example of an Allegory, in the 80th Pſalm; where the people of Iſrael are repreſented

repreſented under the image of a vine, and the figure is ſupported throughout with great correctneſs and beauty; "Thou "haſt brought a vine out of Egypt, thou haſt caſt out the hea"then, and planted it. Thou preparedſt room before it, and "didſt cauſe it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The "hills were covered with the ſhadow of it; and the boughs "thereof were like the goodly cedars. She ſent out her boughs "into the ſea, and her branches into the river. Why haſt thou "broken down her hedges, ſo that all they which paſs by the "way do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waſte it; "and the wild beaſt of the field doth devour it. Return, we "beſeech thee, O God of Hoſts, look down from heaven, and "behold, and viſit this vine!" Here there is no circumſtance, (except perhaps one phraſe at the beginning, "thou haſt caſt "out the heathen") that does not ſtrictly agree to a vine, whilſt, at the ſame time, the whole quadrates happily with the Jewiſh ſtate repreſented by this figure. This is the firſt and principal requiſite in the conduct of an Allegory, that the figurative and the literal meaning be not mixed inconſiſtently together. For inſtance, inſtead of deſcribing the vine, as waſted by the boar from the wood, and devoured by the wild beaſt of the field, had the Pſalmiſt ſaid, it was afflicted by heathens, or overcome by enemies, (which is the real meaning) this would have ruined the Allegory, and produced the ſame confuſion, of which I gave examples in Metaphors, when the figurative and literal ſenſe are mixed and jumbled together. Indeed, the ſame rules that were given for Metaphors, may alſo be applied to Allegories, on account of the affinity they bear to each other. The only material difference between them, beſides the one being ſhort, and the other being prolonged, is, that a Metaphor always explains itſelf by the words that are connected with it in their proper and natural meaning; as when I ſay, "Achilles was a "lion;" an "able miniſter is the pillar of the ſtate." My lion and my pillar are ſufficiently interpreted by the mention of Achilles and the miniſter, which I mean to join to them; but an Allegory is, or may be, allowed to ſtand more diſconnected with the literal meaning; the interpretation not ſo directly pointed out, but left to our own reflection.

Allegories

Allegories were a favourite method of delivering inſtructions in ancient times; for what we call fables or parables are no other than Allegories; where, by words and actions attributed to beaſts or inanimate objects, the diſpoſitions of men are figured; and what we call the moral, is the unfigured ſenſe or meaning of the Allegory. An ænigma or riddle is alſo a ſpecies of Allegory; one thing repreſented or imaged by another; but purpoſely wrapt up under ſo many circumſtances, as to be rendered obſcure. Where a riddle is not intended, it is always a fault in Allegory to be too dark. The meaning ſhould be eaſily ſeen through the figure employed to ſhadow it. However, the proper mixture of light and ſhade in ſuch compoſitions, the exact adjuſtment of all the figurative circumſtances with the literal ſenſe, ſo as neither to lay the meaning too bare and open, nor to cover and wrap it up too much, has ever been found an affair of great nicety; and there are few ſpecies of compoſition in which it is more difficult to write ſo as to pleaſe and command attention, than in Allegories. In ſome of the viſions of the Spectator, we have examples of Allegories very happily executed.

LECTURE

LECTURE XVI.

HYPERBOLE. PERSONIFICATION. APOSTROPHE.

THE next Figure concerning which I am to treat, is called Hyperbole, or Exaggeration. It conſiſts in magnifying an object beyond its natural bounds. It may be conſidered ſometimes as a trope, and ſometimes as a figure of thought: and here indeed the diſtinction between theſe two claſſes begins not to be clear, nor is it of any importance that we ſhould have recourſe to metaphyſical ſubtilties, in order to keep them diſtinct. Whether we call it trope or figure, it is plain that it is a mode of ſpeech which hath ſome foundation in nature. For in all Languages, even in common converſation, hyperbolical expreſſions very frequently occur; as ſwift as the wind; as white as the ſnow, and the like; and our common forms of compliment are almoſt all of them extravagant Hyperboles. If any thing be remarkably good or great in its kind, we are inſtantly ready to add to it ſome exaggerating epithet; and to make it the greateſt or beſt we ever ſaw. The imagination has always a tendency to gratify itſelf, by magnifying its preſent object, and carrying it to exceſs. More or leſs of this hyperbolical turn will prevail in language, according to the livelineſs of imagination among the people who ſpeak it. Hence young people deal always much in Hyperboles. Hence the language of the Orientals was far more hyperbolical than that of the Europeans, who are of more phlegmatic, or if you pleaſe, of more correct imagination. Hence, among all writers in early times, and in the rude periods of ſociety, we may expect this figure to abound. Greater experience, and more cultivated ſociety, abate the warmth of imagination, and chaſten the manner of expreſſion.

The exaggerated expreſſions to which our ears are accuſtomed in converſation, ſcarcely ſtrike us as Hyperboles. In

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an inſtant we make the proper abatement, and underſtand them according to their juſt value. But when there is ſomething ſtriking and unuſual in the form of a hyperbolical expreſſion, it then riſes into a figure of ſpeech which draws our attention: and here it is neceſſary to obſerve, that, unleſs the reader's imagination be in ſuch a ſtate as diſpoſes it to riſe and ſwell along with the hyperbolical expreſſion, he is always hurt and offended by it. For a ſort of diſagreeable force is put upon him; he is required to ſtrain and exert his fancy, when he feels no inclination to make any ſuch effort. Hence the Hyperbole is a figure of difficult management; and ought neither to be frequently uſed, nor long dwelt upon. On ſome occaſions, it is undoubtedly proper; being, as was before obſerved, the natural ſtyle of a ſprightly and heated imagination, but when Hyperboles are unſeaſonable, or too frequent, they render a compoſition frigid and unaffecting. They are the reſource of an author of feeble imagination; of one, deſcribing objects which either want native dignity in themſelves; or whoſe dignity he cannot ſhow by deſcribing them ſimply, and in their juſt proportions, and is therefore obliged to reſt upon tumid and exaggerated expreſſions.

Hyperboles are of two kinds; either ſuch as are employed in deſcription, or ſuch as are ſuggeſted by the warmth of paſſion. The beſt, by far, are thoſe which are the effect of paſſion: for if the imagination has a tendency to magnify its objects beyond their natural proportion, paſſion poſſeſſes this tendency in a vaſtly ſtronger degree; and therefore not only excuſes the moſt daring figures, but very often renders them natural and juſt. All paſſions, without exception, love, terror, amazement, indignation, anger, and even grief, throw the mind into confuſion, aggravate their objects, and of courſe, prompt a hyperbolical ſtyle. Hence the following ſentiments of Satan in Milton, as ſtrongly as they are deſcribed, contain nothing but what is natural and proper; exhibiting the picture of a mind agitated with rage and deſpair.

Me miſerable! which way ſhall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite deſpair?
Which way I fly is hell, myſelf am hell;
And in the loweſt depth, a lower deep
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I ſuffer ſeems a heaven. B. iv. l. 73.

In ſimple deſcription, though Hyperboles are not excluded, yet they muſt be uſed with more caution, and require more preparation, in order to make the mind reliſh them. Either the object deſcribed muſt be of that kind, which of itſelf ſeizes the fancy ſtrongly, and diſpoſes it to run beyond bounds; ſomething vaſt, ſurpriſing, and new; or the writer's art muſt be exerted in heating the fancy gradually, and preparing it to think highly of the object which he intends to exaggerate. When a poet is deſcribing an earthquake or a ſtorm, or when he has brought us into the midſt of a battle, we can bear ſtrong Hyperboles without diſpleaſure. But when he is deſcribing only a woman in grief, it is impoſſible not to be diſguſted with ſuch wild exaggeration as the following, in one of our dramatic poets:

———I found her on the floor
In all the ſtorm of grief, yet beautiful;
Pouring forth tears at ſuch a laviſh rate,
That were the world on fire, they might have drown'd
The wrath of Heaven, and quench'd the mighty ruin. LEE.

This is mere bombaſt. The perſon herſelf who is under the diſtracting agitations of grief, might be permitted to hyperbolize ſtrongly; but the ſpectator deſcribing her, cannot be allowed an equal liberty: for this plain reaſon, that the one is ſuppoſed to utter the ſentiments of paſſion, the other ſpeaks only the language of deſcription, which is always, according to the dictates of nature, on a lower tone: a diſtinction, which, however obvious, has not been attended to by many writers.

How far a Hyperbole, ſuppoſing it properly introduced, may be ſafely carried without overſtretching it; what is the proper meaſure and boundary of this figure, cannot, as far as I know, be aſcertained by any preciſe rule. Good ſenſe and juſt taſte muſt determine the point, beyond which, if we paſs, we become extravagant. Lucan may be pointed out as an author apt to be exceſſive in his Hyperboles. Among the compliments paid by the Roman poets to their Emperors, it had become faſhionable to aſk them, What part of the heavens they would chooſe for their habitation, after they ſhould have become gods? Virgil had already carried this ſufficiently far in his addreſs to Auguſtus:

———Tibi

——Tibi brachia contrahit ingens
Scorpius, & Cœli juſta plus parte relinquit.* Georg. I.

But this did not ſuffice Lucan. Reſolved to outdo all his predeceſſors, in a like addreſs to Nero, he very gravely beſeeches him not to chooſe his place near either of the poles, but to be ſure to occupy juſt the middle of the heavens, leſt, by going either to one ſide or the other, his weight ſhould overſet the univerſe:

Sed neque in Arctoo ſedem tibi legeris orbe,
Nec polus adverſi calidus qua mergitur auſtri;
Ætheris immenſi partem ſi preſſeris unam
Sentiet axis onus. Librati pondera Cœli
Orbe tene medio.†—— PHARS. I. 53.

Such thoughts as theſe, are what the French call *outrés*, and always proceed from a falſe fire of genius. The Spaniſh and African writers, as Tertullian, Cyprian, Auguſtin, are remarked for being fond of them. As in that Epitaph on Charles V. by a Spaniſh writer:

Pro tumulo ponas orbem, pro tegmine cœlum,
Sidera pro facibus, pro lacrymis maria.

Sometimes they dazzle and impoſe by their boldneſs; but wherever reaſon and good ſenſe are ſo much violated, there can be no true beauty. Epigrammatic writers are frequently guilty in this reſpect; reſting the whole merit of their epigrams on ſome extravagant hyperbolical turn; ſuch as the following of Dr. Pitcairn's, upon Holland's being gained from the ocean:

Tellurem fecere Dii; ſua littora Belgæ;
Atque opus immenſæ molis utrumque fuit;
Dii vacuo ſparſas glomerârunt æthera terras,
Nil ibi quod aperi poſſit obeſſe fuit.
At Belgis maria & cœli naturaque rerum
Obſtitit; obſtantes hi domuêre Deos.

So

* "The Scorpion, ready to receive thy laws,
"Yields half his region, and contracts his paws." DRYDEN.

† But, oh! whatever be thy godhead great,
Fix not in regions too remote thy ſeat;
Nor deign thou near the frozen bear to ſhine,
Nor where the ſultry ſouthern ſtars decline.
Preſs not too much on any part the ſphere,
Hard were the taſk thy weight divine to bear;
Soon would the axis feel th' unuſual load,
And, groaning, bend beneath th' incumbent god;
O'er the mid orb more equal ſhalt thou riſe,
And with a juſter balance fix the ſkies. ROWE.

So much for the Hyperbole. We proceed now to thoſe figures which lie altogether in the thought; where the words are taken in their common and literal ſenſe.

Among theſe, the firſt place is unqueſtionably due to Perſonification, or that figure by which we attribute life and action to inanimate objects. The technical term for this is Proſopopœia; but as Perſonification is of the ſame import, and more allied to our own language, it will be better to uſe this word.

It is a figure, the uſe of which is very extenſive, and its foundation laid deep in human nature. At firſt view, and when conſidered abſtractly, it would appear to be a figure of the utmoſt boldneſs, and to border upon the extravagant and ridiculous. For what can ſeem more remote from the track of reaſonable thought, than to ſpeak of ſtones and trees, and fields and rivers, as if they were living creatures, and to attribute to them thought and ſenſation, affections and actions? One might imagine this to be no more than childiſh conceit, which no perſon of taſte could reliſh. In fact, however, the caſe is very different. No ſuch ridiculous effect is produced by Perſonification, when properly employed; on the contrary, it is found to be natural and agreeable; nor is any very uncommon degree of paſſion required, in order to make us reliſh it. All poetry, even in its moſt gentle and humble forms, abounds with it. From proſe, it is far from being excluded; nay, in common converſation, very frequent approaches are made to it. When we ſay, the ground *thirſts* for rain, or the earth *ſmiles* with plenty; when we ſpeak of ambition's being *reſtleſs*, or a diſeaſe being *deceitful*, ſuch expreſſions ſhow the facility with which the mind can accommodate the properties of living creatures to things that are inanimate, or to abſtract conceptions of its own forming.

Indeed, it is very remarkable, that there is a wonderful proneneſs in human nature to animate all objects. Whether this ariſes from a ſort of aſſimilating principle, from a propenſion to ſpread a reſemblance of ourſelves over all other things, or from whatever other cauſe it ariſes, ſo it is, that almoſt every emotion, which in the leaſt agitates the mind, beſtows upon its object a momentary idea of life. Let a man, by an unwary ſtep, ſprain his ankle, or hurt his foot upon a ſtone, and, in the ruffled diſcompoſed moment, he will, ſometimes, feel himſelf diſpoſed

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to break the ſtone in pieces, or to utter paſſionate expreſſions againſt it, as if it had done him an injury. If one has been long accuſtomed to a certain ſet of objects, which have made a ſtrong impreſſion on his imagination; as to a houſe where he has paſſed many agreeable years; or to fields, and trees, and mountains, among which he has often walked with the greateſt delight; when he is obliged to part with them, eſpecially if he has no proſpect of ever ſeeing them again, he can ſcarce avoid having ſomewhat of the ſame feeling as when he is leaving old friends. They ſeem endowed with life. They become objects of his affection; and in the moment of his parting, it ſcarce ſeems abſurd to him, to give vent to his feeling in words, and to make a formal adieu.

So ſtrong is that impreſſion of life which is made upon us, by the more magnificent and ſtriking objects of nature eſpecially, that I doubt not, in the leaſt, of this having been one cauſe of the multiplication of divinities in the heathen world. Dryads and Naiads, the genius of the wood, and the god of the river, were, in men of lively imaginations, in the early ages of the world, eaſily grafted upon this turn of mind. When their favourite rural objects had often been animated in their fancy, it was an eaſy tranſition to attribute to them ſome real divinity, ſome unſeen power or genius which inhabited them, or in ſome peculiar manner belonged to them. Imagination was highly gratified, by thus gaining ſomewhat to reſt upon with more ſtability; and when belief coincided ſo much with imagination, very ſlight cauſes would be ſufficient to eſtabliſh it.

From this deduction, may be eaſily ſeen how it comes to paſs, that Perſonification makes ſo great a figure in all compoſitions, where imagination or paſſion have any concern. On innumerable occaſions, it is the very language of imagination and paſſion, and, therefore, deſerves to be attended to, and examined with peculiar care. There are three different degrees of this figure; which it is neceſſary to remark and diſtinguiſh, in order to determine the propriety of its uſe. The firſt is, when ſome of the properties or qualities of living creatures are aſcribed to inanimate objects; the ſecond, when thoſe inanimate objects are introduced as acting like ſuch as have life; and the third, when they are repreſented, either as ſpeaking to us, or as liſtening to what we ſay to them.

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The firſt, and loweſt degree of this figure, conſiſts in aſcribing to inanimate objects ſome of the qualities of living creatures. Where this is done, as is moſt commonly the caſe, in a word or two, and by way of an epithet added to the object, as, "a raging ſtorm, a deceitful diſeaſe, a cruel diſaſter," &c. it raiſes the ſtyle ſo little, that the humbleſt diſcourſe will admit it without any force. This, indeed, is ſuch an obſcure degree of Perſonification, that one may doubt whether it deſerves the name, and might not be claſſed with ſimple metaphors, which eſcape in a manner unnoticed. Happily employed, however, it ſometimes adds beauty and ſprightlineſs to an expreſſion; as in this line of Virgil:

Aut conjurato deſcendens Dacus ab Iſtro. Geor. II. 474.

Where the perſonal epithet, *conjurato*, applied to the river *Iſtro*, is infinitely more poetical than if it had been applied to the perſon, thus:

Aut conjuratus deſcendens Dacus ab Iſtro.

A very little taſte will make any one feel the difference between theſe two lines.

The next degree of this figure is, when we introduce inanimate objects acting like thoſe that have life. Here we riſe a ſtep higher, and the Perſonification becomes ſenſible. According to the nature of the action, which we attribute to thoſe inanimate objects, and the particularity with which we deſcribe it, ſuch is the ſtrength of the figure. When purſued to any length, it belongs only to ſtudied harangues, to highly figured and eloquent diſcourſe; when ſlightly touched, it may be admitted into ſubjects of leſs elevation. Cicero, for inſtance, ſpeaking of the caſes where killing another is lawful in ſelf-defence, uſes the following words: "Aliquando nobis gladius ad "occidendum hominem ab ipſis porrigitur legibus." (Orat. pro Milone.) The expreſſion is happy. The laws are perſonified, as reaching forth their hand to give us a ſword for putting one to death. Such ſhort Perſonifications as theſe may be admitted, even into moral treatiſes, or works of cool reaſoning; and, provided they be eaſy and not ſtrained, and that we be not cloyed with too frequent returns of them, they have a good effect on ſtyle, and render it both ſtrong and lively.

The

The genius of our Language gives us an advantage in the uſe of this figure. As, with us, no ſubſtantive nouns have gender, or are maſculine and feminine, except the proper names of male and female creatures; by giving a gender to any inanimate object, or abſtract idea, that is, in place of the pronoun *it*, uſing the perſonal pronouns, *he* or *ſhe*, we preſently raiſe the ſtyle, and begin Perſonification. In ſolemn diſcourſe, this can often be done to good purpoſe, when ſpeaking of religion, or virtue, or our country, or any ſuch object of dignity. I ſhall give a remarkably fine example, from a ſermon of Biſhop Sherlock's, where we ſhall ſee natural religion beautifully perſonified, and be able to judge from it, of the ſpirit and grace which this figure, when well conducted, beſtows on a diſcourſe. I muſt take notice, at the ſame time, that it is an inſtance of this figure, carried as far as proſe, even in its higheſt elevation, will admit, and therefore, ſuited only to compoſitions where the great efforts of eloquence are allowed. The Author is comparing together our Saviour and Mahomet: "Go," ſays he, "to your natural "religion; lay before her Mahomet, and his diſciples, arrayed "in armour and blood, riding in triumph over the ſpoils of "thouſands who fell by his victorious ſword. Shew her the "cities which he ſet in flames, the countries which he ravaged "and deſtroyed, and the miſerable diſtreſs of all the inhabitants "of the earth. When ſhe has viewed him in this ſcene, carry "her into his retirement; ſhew her the prophet's chamber; "his concubines and his wives; and let her hear him allege "revelation, and a divine commiſſion, to juſtify his adultery "and luſt. When ſhe is tired with this proſpect, then ſhew "her the bleſſed Jeſus, humble and meek, doing good to all the "ſons of men. Let her ſee him in his moſt retired privacies; "let her follow him to the Mount, and hear his devotions and "ſupplications to God. Carry her to his table, to view his "poor fare, and hear his heavenly diſcourſe. Let her attend "him to the tribunal, and conſider the patience with which "he endured the ſcoffs and reproaches of his enemies. Lead "her to his croſs; let her view him in the agony of death, and "hear his laſt prayer for his perſecutors: *Father, forgive them, "for they know not what they do!* When Natural Religion has "thus viewed both, aſk her, Which is the Prophet of God?

"But

"But her anſwer we have already had, when ſhe ſaw part of "this ſcene, through the eyes of the centurion, who attended "at the croſs. By him ſhe ſpoke, and ſaid, *Truly, this man "was the Son of God.*"* This is more than elegant; it is truly ſublime. The whole paſſage is animated; and the figure riſes at the concluſion, when Natural Religion, who, before was only a ſpectator, is introduced as ſpeaking by the centurion's voice. It has the better effect too, that it occurs at the concluſion of a diſcourſe, where we naturally look for moſt warmth and dignity. Did Biſhop Sherlock's Sermons, or, indeed any Engliſh ſermons whatever, afford us many paſſages equal to this, we ſhould oftener have recourſe to them for inſtances of the beauty of compoſition.

Hitherto we have ſpoken of proſe; in poetry, Perſonifications of this kind are extremely frequent, and are, indeed, the life and ſoul of it. We expect to find every thing animated in the deſcription of a poet who has a lively fancy. Accordingly Homer, the father and prince of poets, is remarkable for the uſe of this figure. War, peace, darts, ſpears, towns, rivers, every thing, in ſhort, is alive in his writings. The ſame is the caſe with Milton and Shakeſpeare. No Perſonification, in any author, is more ſtriking or introduced on a more proper occaſion, than the following of Milton's, on occaſion of Eve's eating the forbidden fruit:

> So ſaying, her raſh hand, in evil hour
> Forth reaching to the fruit, ſhe pluck'd, ſhe ate;
> Earth felt the wound; and nature from her ſeat
> Sighing, through all her works, gave ſigns of woe,
> That all was loſt.——— ix. 780.

All the circumſtances and ages of men, poverty, riches, youth, old age, all the diſpoſitions and paſſions, melancholy, love, grief, contentment, are capable of being perſonified in poetry, with great propriety. Of this, we meet with frequent examples in Milton's Allegro and Penſeroſo, Parnell's Hymn to Contentment, Thomſon's Seaſons, and all the good poets: nor, indeed, is it eaſy to ſet any bounds to Perſonification of this kind, in poetry.

One

* Biſhop Sherlock's Sermons, Vol. I. Diſc. ix.

One of the greateſt pleaſures we receive from poetry, is, to find ourſelves always in the midſt of our fellows; and to ſee every thing thinking, feeling, and acting, as we ourſelves do. This is, perhaps, the principal charm of this ſort of figured ſtyle, that it introduces us into ſociety with all nature, and intereſts us, even in inanimate objects, by forming a connexion between them and us, through that ſenſibility which it aſcribes to them. This is exemplified in the following beautiful paſſage of Thomſon's Summer, wherein the life which he beſtows upon all nature, when deſcribing the effects of the riſing ſun, renders the ſcenery uncommonly gay and intereſting:

But yonder comes the powerful king of day
Rejoicing in the eaſt. The leſſening cloud,
The kindling azure and the mountain's brow
Tipt with æthereal gold, his near approach
Betoken glad.——————
——————By thee refin'd,
In briſker meaſures, the relucent ſtream
Friſks o'er the mead. The precipice abrupt,
Projecting horror on the blacken'd flood,
Softens at thy return. The deſart joys,
Wildly, through all his melancholy bounds.
Rude ruins glitter; and the briny deep,
Seen from ſome pointed promontory's top,
Reflects from every fluctuating wave,
A glance extenſive as the day.——

The ſame effect is remarkable in that fine paſſage of Milton;

——————To the nuptial bower,
I led her bluſhing like the morn. All heaven
And happy conſtellations, on that hour,
Shed their ſelecteſt influence. The earth
Gave ſigns of gratulation, and each hill.
Joyous the birds; freſh gales and gentle airs
Whiſper'd it to the woods, and from their wings
Flung roſe, flung odour from the ſpicy ſhrub,
Diſporting.——————

The third and higheſt degree of this figure remains to be mentioned, when inanimate objects are introduced, not only as feeling and acting, but as ſpeaking to us, or hearing and liſtening when we addreſs ourſelves to them. This, though on ſeveral occaſions far from being unnatural, is, however, more difficult in the execution, than the other kinds of Perſon-

ification. For this is plainly the boldeſt of all rhetorical figures; it is the ſtyle of a ſtrong paſſion only; and, therefore, never to be attempted, unleſs when the mind is conſiderably heated and agitated. A ſlight Perſonification of ſome inanimate thing, acting as if it had life, can be reliſhed by the mind, in the midſt of cool deſcription, and when its ideas are going on in the ordinary train. But it muſt be in a ſtate of violent emotion, and have departed conſiderably from its common track of thought, before it can ſo far realiſe the Perſonification of an inſenſible object, as to conceive it liſtening to what we ſay, or making any return to us. All ſtrong paſſions, however, have a tendency to uſe this figure; not only love, anger, and indignation, but even thoſe which are ſeemingly more diſpiriting, ſuch as, grief, remorſe, and melancholy. For all paſſions ſtruggle for vent, and if they can find no other object, will, rather than be ſilent, pour themſelves forth to woods, and rocks, and the moſt inſenſible things; eſpecially if theſe be any how connected with the cauſes and objects that have thrown the mind into this agitation. Hence, in poetry, where the greateſt liberty is allowed to the Language of paſſion, it is eaſy to produce many beautiful examples of this figure. Milton affords us an extremely fine one, in that moving and tender addreſs which Eve makes to Paradiſe, juſt before ſhe is compelled to leave it.

> Oh! unexpected ſtroke, worſe than of death!
> Muſt I thus leave thee, Paradiſe! thus leave
> Thee, native ſoil, theſe happy walks, and ſhades,
> Fit haunt of gods! where I had hope to ſpend
> Quiet, though ſad, the reſpite of that day,
> Which muſt be mortal to us both. O flowers!
> That never will in other climate grow,
> My early viſitation, and my laſt
> At ev'n, which I bred up with tender hand,
> From your firſt op'ning buds, and gave you names!
> Who now ſhall rear you to the ſun, or rank
> Your tribes, and water from th' ambroſial fount?
>
> Book XII. l. 268.

This is altogether the language of nature, and of female paſſion. It is obſervable, that all plaintive paſſions are peculiarly prone to the uſe of this figure. The complaints which Philoctetes, in Sophocles, pours out to the rocks and caves of Lemnos, amidſt the exceſs of his grief and deſpair, are remarkably fine examples

examples of it.* And there are frequent examples, not in poetry only, but in real life, of perſons, when juſt about to ſuffer death, taking a paſſionate farewel of the ſun, moon, and ſtars, or other ſenſible objects around them.

There are two great rules for the management of this ſort of Perſonification. The firſt rule is, never to attempt it, unleſs when prompted by ſtrong paſſion, and never to continue it when the paſſion begins to flag. It is one of thoſe high ornaments, which can only find place in the moſt warm and ſpirited parts of compoſition; and there, too, muſt be employed with moderation.

The ſecond rule is, never to perſonify any object in this way, but ſuch as has ſome dignity in itſelf, and can make a proper figure in this elevation to which we raiſe it. The obſervance of this rule is required, even in the lower degrees of Perſonification; but ſtill more, when an addreſs is made to the perſonified object. To addreſs the corpſe of a deceaſed friend, is natural; but to addreſs the clothes which he wore, introduces mean and degrading ideas. So alſo, addreſſing the ſeveral parts of one's body, as if they were animated, is not congruous to the dignity of paſſion. For this reaſon, I muſt condemn the following paſſage, in a very beautiful poem of Mr. Pope's, Eloiſa to Abelard.

> Dear fatal name! reſt ever unreveal'd,
> Nor paſs theſe lips in holy ſilence ſeal'd.
> Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe diſguiſe,
> Where, mix'd with God's, his lov'd idea lies:
> Oh! write it not, my hand!—his name appears
> Already written—Blot it out, my tears!

Here are ſeveral different objects and parts of the body perſonified; and each of them is addreſſed or ſpoken to; let us conſider

* "Ω λιμενες ἄ προβυγητες, ἄ ξυνοσιαι
Θηρων ορειων, ὦ κατορῤῥωγες πετραι
Τμιν ταδ' ὐ γαρ αλλον υιδ' ὁτω λεγω.
Ἀνακλυιομαι παρυσι τοις ιωθισιν, &c.

"O mountains, rivers, rocks, and ſavage herds,
"To you I ſpeak! to you alone, I now
"Muſt breathe my ſorrows! you are wont to hear
"My ſad complaints, and I will tell you all
"That I have ſuffered from Achilles' ſon!"

FRANKLIN.

ſider with what propriety. The firſt is, the name of Abelard: "Dear fatal name! reſt ever," &c. To this, no reaſonable objection can be made. For, as the name of a perſon often ſtands for the perſon himſelf, and ſuggeſts the ſame ideas, it can bear this Perſonification with ſufficient dignity. Next, Eloiſa ſpeaks to herſelf, and perſonifies her heart for this purpoſe: "Hide it, my heart, within that cloſe," &c. As the heart is a dignified part of the human frame, and is often put for the mind, or affections, this alſo may paſs without blame. But, when from heart ſhe paſſes to her hand, and tells her hand not to write his name, this is forced and unnatural; a perſonified hand is low, and not in the ſtyle of true paſſion: and the figure becomes ſtill worſe, when, in the laſt place, ſhe exhorts her tears to blot out what her hand had written; "Oh! write in not," &c. There is, in theſe two lines, an air of epigrammatic conceit, which native paſſion never ſuggeſts; and which is altogether unſuitable to the tenderneſs which breathes through the reſt of that excellent poem.

In proſe compoſitions, this figure requires to be uſed with ſtill greater moderation and delicacy. The ſame liberty is not allowed to the imagination there, as in poetry. The ſame aſſiſtances cannot be obtained for raiſing paſſion to its proper height, by the force of numbers, and the glow of ſtyle. However, addreſſes to inanimate objects are not excluded from proſe; but have their place only in the higher ſpecies of oratory. A public ſpeaker may, on ſome occaſions, very properly addreſs religion or virtue; or his native country, or ſome city or province, which has ſuffered perhaps great calamities, or been the ſcene of ſome memorable action. But we muſt remember, that as ſuch addreſſes are among the higheſt efforts of eloquence, they ſhould never be attempted, unleſs by perſons of more than ordinary genius. For if the orator fails in his deſign of moving our paſſions by them, he is ſure of being laughed at. Of all frigid things, the moſt frigid, are the awkward and unſeaſonable attempts ſometimes made towards ſuch kinds of Perſonification, eſpecially if they be long continued. We ſee the writer or ſpeaker toiling and labouring, to expreſs the language of ſome paſſion, which he neither feels himſelf, nor can make us

feel.

feel. We remain not only cold, but frozen; and are at full leiſure to criticiſe on the ridiculous figure which the perſonified object makes, when we ought to have been tranſported with a glow of enthuſiaſm. Some of the French writers, particularly Boſſuet and Flechier, in their ſermons and funeral orations, have attempted and executed this figure, not without warmth and dignity. Their works are exceedingly worthy of being conſulted, for inſtances of this, and of ſeveral other ornaments of ſtyle. Indeed the vivacity and ardour of the French genius is more ſuited to this animated kind of oratory, than the more correct, but more phlegmatic genius of the Britiſh, who, in their proſe works, very rarely attempt any of the high figures of eloquence.* So much for Perſonification or Proſopopœia, in all its different forms.

Apoſtrophe

* In the "Oraiſons Funebres de M. Boſſuet," which I conſider as one of the maſter-pieces of modern eloquence, Apoſtrophes and addreſſes, to perſonified objects, frequently occur, and are ſupported with much ſpirit. Thus, for inſtance, in the funeral oration of Mary of Auſtria, Queen of France, the author addreſſes Algiers, in the proſpect of the advantage which the arms of Louis XIV. were to gain over it: "Avant lui la France, preſque ſans vaiſ-"ſeaux, tenoit en vain aux deux mers. Maintenant, on les voit couvertes "depuis le Levant juſqu'au couchant de nos flottes victorieuſes; & la hardi-"eſſe Françoiſe porte par tout la terreur avec le nom de Louis. Tu cederas, "tu tomberas ſous ce vainqueur, Alger! riche des depouilles de la Chreti-"enté. Tu diſois en ton cœur avare, je tiens la mer ſous mes loix, & les na-"tions ſont ma proie. La legereté de tes vaiſſeaux te donnoit de la confiance. "Mais tu te verras attaqué dans tes murailles, comme, un oiſeau raviſſant "qu'on iroit chercher parmi ſes rochers, & dans ſon nid, où il partage ſon "butin à ſes petits. Tu rends deja tes eſclaves. Louis a briſé les fers dont "tu accablois ſes ſujets, &c." In another paſſage of the ſame oration, he thus apoſtrophizes the Iſle of Pheaſants, which had been rendered famous by being the ſcene of thoſe conferences, in which the treaty of the Pyrenees between France and Spain, and the marriage of this Princeſs with the King of France, were concluded. "Iſle pacifique où ſe doivent terminer les differends de deux "grands empires à qui tu ſers de limites: iſle éternellement memorable par "les conferences de deux grands miniſtres. Auguſte journée où deux fieres "nations, long tems ennemis, et alors reconciliées par Marie Thereſe, s'avan-"cent ſur leur confins, leurs rois à leur tête, non plus pour ſe combattre, mais "pour s'embraſſer. Fêtes ſacrées, marriage fortuné, voile nuptial, benediction, "ſacrifice, puis-je meler aujourdhui vos ceremonies, et vos pompes avec ces "pompes funebres, & le comble des grandeurs avec leurs ruines!" In the funeral oration of Henrietta, Queen of England, (which is perhaps the nobleſt of all his compoſitions) after recounting all ſhe had done to ſupport her unfortunate huſband, he concludes with this beautiful Apoſtrophe: "O mere! "O femme! O reine admirable & digne d'une meilleure fortune, ſi les fortunes "de la terre étoient quelque choſe! Enfin il faut ceder à votre ſort. Vous "avez aſſez ſoutenu l'état, qui eſt attaqué, par une force invincible et divine, "Il ne reſte plus deſormais, ſi non que vous teniez ferme parmi ſes ruines."

Apoſtrophe is a figure ſo much of the ſame kind, that it will not require many words. It is an addreſs to a real perſon; but one who is either abſent or dead, as if he were preſent, and liſtening to us. It is ſo much allied to an addreſs to inanimate objects perſonified, that both theſe figures are ſometimes called Apoſtrophes. However, the proper Apoſtrophe is in boldneſs one degree lower than the addreſs to perſonified objects; for it certainly requires a leſs effort of imagination to ſuppoſe perſons preſent who are dead or abſent, than to animate inſenſible beings, and direct our diſcourſe to them. Both figures are ſubject to the ſame rule of being prompted by paſſion, in order to render them natural; for both are the language of paſſion or ſtrong emotions only. Among the poets, Apoſtrophe is frequent; as in Virgil:

——Pereunt Hypaniſque Dymaſque
Confixi a ſociis; nec te, tua plurima, Panthen,
Labentem pietas, nec Apollinis infula texit!*

The poems of Oſſian are full of the moſt beautiful inſtances of this figure: "Weep on the rocks of roaring winds, O maid "of Iniſtore! Bend thy fair head over the waves, thou fairer "than the ghoſt of the hills, when it moves in a ſunbeam at "noon over the ſilence of Morven! He is fallen! Thy youth "is low; pale beneath the ſword of Cuchullin!"† Quintilian affords us a very fine example in proſe; when, in the beginning of his ſixth book, deploring the untimely death of his ſon, which had happened during the courſe of the work, he makes a very moving and tender Apoſtrophe to him. "Nam "quo ille animo, qua medicorum admiratione, menſium acto "valetudinem tulit? ut me in ſupremis conſolatus eſt? quam "etiam jam deficiens, jamque non noſter, ipſum illum alienatæ "mentis errorem circa ſolas literas habuit? Tuoſne ergo, O "meæ ſpes inanes! labentes oculos, tuum fugientem ſpiritum "vidi? Tuum corpus frigidum, exangues complexus, animam "recipere, auramque communem haurire amplius potui? Tene, "conſulari nuper adoptione ad omnium ſpes honorum patris "admotum, te, avunculo prætori generum deſtinatum; te, "omnium ſpe Atticæ eloquentiæ candidatum, parens ſuperſtes "tantum

* Nor Pantheus! thee, thy mitre, nor the bands
Of awful Phœbus ſav'd from impious hands. DRYDEN.

† Fingal, B. I.

"tantum ad pœnas amisi!"* In this paſſage, Quintilian ſhews the true genius of an orator, as much as he does elſewhere that of the critic.

For ſuch bold figures of diſcourſe as ſtrong Perſonifications, addreſſes to perſonified objects, and Apoſtrophes, the glowing imagination of the ancient Oriental nations was particularly fitted. Hence, in the ſacred ſcriptures, we find ſome very remarkable inſtances: "O thou ſword of the Lord! how long "will it be ere thou be quiet? put thyſelf up into thy ſcab"bard, reſt and be ſtill! How can it be quiet, ſeeing the Lord "hath given it a charge againſt Aſhkelon, and againſt the ſea"ſhore? there hath he appointed it."† There is one paſſage in particular, which I muſt not omit to mention, becauſe it contains a greater aſſemblage of ſublime ideas, of bold and daring figures, than is perhaps any where to be met with. It is in the fourteenth chapter of Iſaiah, where the prophet thus deſcribes the fall of the Aſſyrian empire: "Thou ſhalt take up "this proverb againſt the king of Babylon, and ſay, How hath "the oppreſſor ceaſed! the golden city ceaſed! The Lord hath "broken the ſtaff of the wicked, and the ſceptre of the rulers. "He who ſmote the people in wrath with a continual ſtroke: "he that ruled the nations in anger, is perſecuted, and none "hindereth. The whole earth is at reſt, and is quiet: they "break forth into ſinging. Yea, the fir-trees rejoice at thee, "and the cedars of Lebanon, ſaying, Since thou art laid down, "no feller is come up againſt us. Hell from beneath is moved "for thee to meet thee at thy coming: it ſtirreth up the dead "for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth: it hath raiſed "up

* "With what ſpirit, and how much to the admiration of the phyſicians "did he bear throughout eight months his lingering diſtreſs? With what "tender attention did he ſtudy, even in the laſt extremity, to comfort me? "And, when no longer himſelf, how affecting was it to behold the diſordered "efforts of his wandering mind, wholly employed on ſubjects of literature? "Ah! my fruſtrated and fallen hopes! Have I then beheld your cloſing eyes, "and heard the laſt groan iſſue from your lips? After having embraced your "cold and breathleſs body, how was it in my power to draw the vital air, or "continue to drag a miſerable life? When I had juſt beheld you raiſed by con"ſular adoption to the proſpect of all your father's honours, deſtined to be "ſon-in-law to your uncle the Prætor, pointed out by general expectation as "the ſucceſsful candidate for the prize of Attic eloquence, in this moment of "your opening honours, muſt I loſe you forever, and remain an unhappy "parent, ſurviving only to ſuffer woe?"

† Jer. xlvii. 6, 7.

"up from their thrones all the kings of the nations. All they "shall ſpeak, and ſay unto thee, art thou alſo become weak as "we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought "down to the grave, and the noiſe of thy viols; the worm is "ſpread under thee, and the worms cover thee. How art thou "fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning! how "art thou cut down to the ground, which didſt weaken the "nations! For thou haſt ſaid in thine heart, I will aſcend into "heaven, I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God: I "will ſit alſo upon the mount of the congregation, in the ſides "of the north. I will aſcend above the heights of the clouds, "I will be like the Moſt High. Yet thou ſhalt be brought "down to hell, to the ſides of the pit. They that ſee thee "ſhall narrowly look upon thee, and conſider thee, ſaying, Is "this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did ſhake "kingdoms? That made the world as a wilderneſs, and de-"ſtroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the houſe of his "priſoners? All the kings of the nations, even all of them lie "in glory, every one in his own houſe. But thou art caſt out "of thy grave, like an abominable branch: and as the raiment "of thoſe that are ſlain, thruſt through with a ſword, that go "down to the ſtones of the pit, as a carcaſs trodden under "feet." This whole paſſage is full of ſublimity. Every object is animated; a variety of perſonages are introduced: we hear the Jews, the fir-trees, and cedars of Lebanon, the ghoſts of departed kings, the king of Babylon himſelf, and thoſe who look upon his body, all ſpeaking in their order, and acting their different parts without confuſion.

LECTURE

LECTURE XVII.

COMPARISON, ANTITHESIS, INTERROGATION, EXCLAMATION, AND OTHER FIGURES OF SPEECH.

WE are ſtill engaged in the conſideration of figures of ſpeech; which, as they add much to the beauty of ſtyle when properly employed, and are at the ſame time liable to be greatly abuſed, require a careful diſcuſſion. As it would be tedious to dwell on all the variety of figurative expreſſions which rhetoricians have enumerated, I choſe to ſelect the capital figures, ſuch as occur moſt frequently, and to make my remarks on theſe; the principles and rules laid down concerning them, will ſufficiently direct us to the uſe of the reſt, either in proſe or poetry. Of Metaphor, which is the moſt common of them all, I treated fully; and in the laſt Lecture I diſcourſed of Hyperbole, Perſonification, and Apoſtrophe. This Lecture will nearly finiſh what remains on the head of figures.

Compariſon, or Simile, is what I am to treat of firſt: a figure frequently employed both by poets and proſe writers, for the ornament of compoſition. In a former Lecture, I explained fully the difference betwixt this and Metaphor. A Metaphor is a Compariſon implied, but not expreſſed as ſuch; as when I ſay, "Achilles is a Lion," meaning, that he reſembles one in courage or ſtrength. A Compariſon is, when the reſemblance between two objects is expreſſed in form, and generally purſued more fully than the nature of a Metaphor admits; as when I ſay, "The actions of princes are like thoſe great riv-"ers, the courſe of which every one beholds, but their ſprings "have been ſeen by few." This ſlight inſtance will ſhow, that a happy Compariſon is a kind of ſparkling ornament, which adds not a little luſtre and beauty to diſcourſe; and hence ſuch figures are termed by Cicero, "Orationis lumina."

The pleaſure we take in Compariſons is juſt and natural. We may remark three different ſources whence it ariſes. Firſt, From the pleaſure which nature has annexed to that act of the mind by which we compare any two objects together, trace reſemblances among thoſe that are different, and differences among thoſe that reſemble each other; a pleaſure, the final cauſe of which is, to prompt us to remark and obſerve, and thereby to make us advance in uſeful knowledge. This operation of the mind is naturally and univerſally agreeable; as appears from the delight which even children have in comparing things together, as ſoon as they are capable of attending to the objects that ſurround them. Secondly, The pleaſure of Compariſon ariſes from the illuſtration which the Simile employed gives to the principal object; from the clearer view of it which it preſents; or the more ſtrong impreſſion of it which it ſtamps upon the mind: and, thirdly, It ariſes from the introduction of a new, and commonly a ſplendid object, aſſociated to the principal one of which we treat; and from the agreeable picture which that object preſents to the fancy; new ſcenes being thereby brought into view, which, without the aſſiſtance of this figure, we could not have enjoyed.

All Compariſons whatever may be reduced under two heads, *Explaining* and *Embelliſhing* Compariſons. For when a writer likens the object of which he treats to any other thing, it always is, or at leaſt always ſhould be, with a view either to make us underſtand that object more diſtinctly, or to dreſs it up, and adorn it. All manner of ſubjects admit of Explaining Compariſons. Let an author be reaſoning ever ſo ſtrictly, or treating the moſt abſtruſe point in philoſophy, he may very properly introduce a Compariſon, merely with a view to make his ſubject better underſtood. Of this nature, is the following in Mr. Harris's Hermes, employed to explain a very abſtract point, the diſtinction between the powers of ſenſe and imagination in the human mind. "As wax," ſays he, "would not be "adequate to the purpoſe of ſignatures, if it had not the power "to retain as well as to receive the impreſſion; the ſame holds "of the ſoul, with reſpect to ſenſe and imagination. Senſe is "its receptive power; imagination its retentive. Had it ſenſe "without imagination, it would not be as wax, but as water,

"where,

"where, though all impreſſions be inſtantly made, yet as ſoon "as they are made, they are inſtantly loſt." In Compariſons of this nature, the underſtanding is concerned much more than the fancy; and therefore the only rules to be obſerved, with reſpect to them, are, that they be clear, and that they be uſeful; that they tend to render our conception of the principal object more diſtinct; and that they do not lead our view aſide, and bewilder it with any falſe light.

But Embelliſhing Compariſons, introduced not ſo much with a view to inform and inſtruct, as to adorn the ſubject of which we treat, are thoſe with which we are chiefly concerned at preſent, as figures of ſpeech; and thoſe, indeed, which moſt frequently occur. Reſemblance, as I before mentioned, is the foundation of this figure. We muſt not, however, take reſemblance, in too ſtrict a ſenſe, for actual ſimilitude or likeneſs of appearance. Two objects may ſometimes be very happily compared to one another, though they reſemble each other, ſtrictly ſpeaking, in nothing; only, becauſe they agree in the effects which they produce upon the mind; becauſe they raiſe a train of ſimilar, or what may be called, concordant ideas; ſo that the remembrance of the one, when recalled, ſerves to ſtrengthen the impreſſion made by the other. For example, to deſcribe the nature of ſoft and melancholy muſic, Oſſian ſays, "The "muſic of Carryl was, like the memory of joys that are paſt, "pleaſant and mournful to the ſoul." This is happy and delicate. Yet, ſurely, no kind of muſic has any reſemblance to a feeling of the mind, ſuch as the memory of paſt joys. Had it been compared to the voice of the nightingale, or the murmur of the ſtream, as it would have been by ſome ordinary poet, the likeneſs would have been more ſtrict; but, by founding his Simile upon the effect which Carryl's muſic produced, the poet, while he conveys a very tender image, gives us, at the ſame time, a much ſtronger impreſſion of the nature and ſtrain of that muſic: "Like the memory of joys that are paſt, pleaſant and mourn-"ful to the ſoul."

In general, whether Compariſons be founded on the ſimilitude of the two objects compared, or on ſome analogy and agreement in their effects, the fundamental requiſite of a Compariſon is, that it ſhall ſerve to illuſtrate the object, for the ſake of which it is introduced,

introduced, and to give us a ſtronger conception of it. Some little excurſions of fancy may be permitted, in purſuing the Simile; but they muſt never deviate far from the principal object. If it be a great and noble one, every circumſtance in the Compariſon muſt tend to aggrandiſe it; if it be a beautiful one, to render it more amiable; if terrible, to fill us with more awe. But to be a little more particular: The rules to be given concerning Compariſons, reſpect chiefly two articles; the propriety of their introduction, and the nature of the objects whence they are taken. Firſt, the propriety of their introduction. From what has been already ſaid of Compariſons, it appears, that they are not, like the figures of which I treated in the laſt Lecture, the language of ſtrong paſſion. No; they are the language of imagination rather than of paſſion; of an imagination ſprightly, indeed, and warmed; but undiſturbed by any violent or agitating emotion. Strong paſſion is too ſevere to admit this play of fancy. It has no leiſure to caſt about for reſembling objects; it dwells on that object which has ſeized and taken poſſeſſion of the ſoul. It is too much occupied and filled by it, to turn its view aſide, or to fix its attention on any other thing. An author, therefore, can ſcarcely commit a greater fault, than, in the midſt of paſſion, to introduce a ſimile. Metaphorical expreſſion may be allowable in ſuch a ſituation; though even this may be carried too far: but the pomp and ſolemnity of a formal Compariſon is altogether a ſtranger to paſſion. It changes the key in a moment; relaxes and brings down the mind; and ſhews us a writer perfectly at his eaſe, while he is perſonating ſome other, who is ſuppoſed to be under the torment of agitation. Our writers of tragedies are very apt to err here. In ſome of Mr. Rowe's plays, theſe flowers of Similes have been ſtrewed unſeaſonably. Mr. Addiſon's Cato, too, is juſtly cenſurable in this reſpect; as, when Portius, juſt after Lucia had bid him farewel forever, and when he ſhould naturally have been repreſented as in the moſt violent anguiſh, makes his reply in a ſtudied and affected Compariſon:

Thus o'er the dying lamp th' unſteady flame
Hangs quiv'ring on a point, leaps off by fits,
And falls again, as loth to quit its hold.
Thou muſt not go; my ſoul ſtill hovers o'er thee,
And can't get looſe.

Every

Every one muſt be ſenſible, that this is quite remote from the language of nature on ſuch occaſions.

However, as Compariſon is not the ſtyle of ſtrong paſſion, ſo neither, when employed for embelliſhment, is it the language of a mind wholly unmoved. It is a figure of dignity, and always requires ſome elevation in the ſubject, in order to make it proper: for it ſuppoſes the imagination to be uncommonly enlivened, though the heart be not agitated by paſſion. In a word, the proper place of Compariſons lies in the middle region between the highly pathetic, and the very humble ſtyle. This is a wide field, and gives ample range to the figure. But even this field we muſt take care not to overſtock with it. For, as was before ſaid, it is a ſparkling ornament; and all things that ſparkle, dazzle and fatigue, if they recur too often. Similes ſhould, even in poetry, be uſed with moderation; but in proſe writings, much more: otherwiſe, the ſtyle will become diſguſtingly luſcious, and the ornament loſe its virtue and effect.

I proceed, next, to the rules that relate to objects, whence Compariſons ſhould be drawn: ſuppoſing them introduced in their proper place.

In the firſt place, they muſt not be drawn from things, which have too near and obvious a reſemblance to the object with which we compare them. The great pleaſure of the act of comparing lies, in diſcovering likeneſſes among things of different ſpecies, where we would not, at the firſt glance, expect a reſemblance. There is little art or ingenuity in pointing out the reſemblance of two objects, that are ſo much akin, or lie ſo near to one another in nature, that every one ſees they muſt be like. When Milton compares Satan's appearance, after his fall, to that of the ſun ſuffering an eclipſe, and affrighting the nations with portentous darkneſs, we are ſtruck with the happineſs and the dignity of the ſimilitude. But, when he compares Eve's bower in Paradiſe, to the arbour of Pomona; or Eve herſelf, to a dryad or wood-nymph, we receive little entertainment; as every one ſees, that one arbour muſt, of courſe, in ſeveral reſpects, reſemble another arbour, and one beautiful woman another beautiful woman.

Among Similes, faulty through too great obviouſneſs of the likeneſs, we muſt likewiſe rank thoſe which are taken from objects become trite and familiar in poetical language. Such

are

are the Similes of a hero to a lion, of a perſon in ſorrow to a flower drooping its head, of violent paſſion to a tempeſt, of chaſtity to ſnow, of virtue to the ſun or the ſtars, and many more of this kind, with which we are ſure to find modern writers, of ſecond rate genius, abounding plentifully; handed down from every writer of verſes to another, as by hereditary right. Theſe Compariſons were, at firſt, perhaps, very proper, for the purpoſes to which they are applied. In the ancient original poets who took them directly from nature, not from their predeceſſors, they had beauty. But they are now beaten; our ears are ſo accuſtomed to them, that they give no amuſement to the fancy. There is, indeed, no mark by which we can more readily diſtinguiſh a poet of true genius, from one of a barren imagination, than by the ſtrain of their Compariſons. All who call themſelves poets, affect them: but, whereas, a mere verſifier copies no new image from nature, which appears, to his uninventive genius, exhauſted by thoſe who have gone before him, and, therefore, contents himſelf with humbly following their track; to an author of real fancy, nature ſeems to unlock, ſpontaneouſly, her hidden ſtores; and the eye, "quick "glancing from earth to heaven," diſcovers new ſhapes and forms, new likeneſſes between objects unobſerved before, which render his Similes original, expreſſive, and lively.

(But, in the ſecond place, as Compariſons ought not to be founded on likeneſſes too obvious, ſtill leſs ought they to be founded on thoſe which are too faint and remote. For theſe, in place of aſſiſting, ſtrain the fancy to comprehend them, and throw no light upon the ſubject.) It is alſo to be obſerved, that a Compariſon, which, in the principal circumſtances, carries a ſufficiently near reſemblance, may become unnatural and obſcure, if puſhed too far. Nothing is more oppoſite to the deſign of this figure, than to hunt after a great number of coincidences in minute points, merely to ſhow how far the poet's wit can ſtretch the reſemblance. This is Mr. Cowley's common fault; whoſe Compariſons generally run out ſo far, as to become rather a ſtudied exerciſe of wit, than an illuſtration of the principal object. We need only open his works, his odes eſpecially, to find inſtances every where.

In

In the third place, the object from which a Comparison is drawn, should never be an unknown object, or one of which few people can form clear ideas. "Ad inferendam rebus lucem," says Quintilian, "repertæ sunt similitudines. Præcipuè, igitur, est custodiendum ne id quod similitudinis gratiâ "asciviмus, aut obscurum fit, aut ignotum. Debet enim id quod "illustrandæ alterius rei gratiâ assumitur, ipsum esse clarius eo "quod illuminatur."* Comparisons, therefore, founded on philosophical discoveries, or on any thing in which persons of a certain trade only, or a certain profession, are conversant, attain not their proper effect. They should be taken from those illustrious, noted objects, which most of the readers either have seen, or can strongly conceive. This leads me to remark a fault of which modern poets are very apt to be guilty. The ancients took their Similes from that face of nature, and that class of objects, with which they and their readers were acquainted. Hence lions, and wolves, and serpents, were fruitful, and very proper sources of Similes amongst them; and these having become a sort of consecrated, classical images, are very commonly adopted by the moderns; injudiciously, however, for the propriety of them is now in a great measure lost. It is only at second hand, and by description, that we are acquainted with many of those objects; and, to most readers of poetry, it were more to the purpose, to describe lions or serpents, by Similes taken from men, than to describe men by lions. Now-a-days, we can much easier form the conception of a fierce combat between two men, than between a bull and a tyger. Every country has a scenery peculiar to itself, and the imagery of every good poet will exhibit it. The introduction of unknown objects, or of a foreign scenery, betrays a poet copying, not after nature, but from other writers. I have only to observe further,

In the fourth place, that, in compositions of a serious or elevated kind, Similes should never be taken from low or mean objects. These are degrading; whereas, Similes are commonly intended to embellish, and to dignify: and therefore, unless in

* "Comparisons have been introduced into discourse, for the sake of throw-"ing light on the subject. We must, therefore, be much on our guard, not to "employ, as the ground of our Simile, any object which is either obscure or un-"known. That surely, which is used for the purpose of illustrating some other "thing, ought to be more obvious and plain, than the thing intended to be "illustrated."

in burlesque writings, or where Similes are introduced purposely to vilify and diminish an object, mean ideas should never be presented to us.) Some of Homer's Comparisons have been taxed, without reason, on this account. For it is to be remembered, that the meanness or dignity of objects, depends, in a great degree, on the ideas and manners of the age wherein we live. Many Similes, therefore, drawn from the incidents of rural life, which appear low to us, had abundance of dignity in those simpler ages of antiquity.

I have now considered such of the figures of speech as seemed most to merit a full and particular discussion: Metaphor, Hyperbole, Personification, Apostrophe, and Comparison. A few more yet remain to be mentioned; the proper use and conduct of which will be easily understood from the principles already laid down.

As Comparison is founded on the resemblance, so (Antithesis on the contrast or opposition of two objects.) (Contrast has always this effect, to make each of the contrasted objects appear in the strongest light. White, for instance, never appears so bright, as when it is opposed to black; and when both are viewed together. Antithesis, therefore, may, on many occasions, be employed to advantage, in order to strengthen the impression which we intend that any object should make. Thus Cicero in his oration for Milo, representing the improbability of Milo's forming a design to take away the life of Clodius, at a time when all circumstances were unfavourable to such a design, and after he had let other opportunities slip when he could have executed the same design, if he had formed it, with much more ease and safety, heightens our conviction of this improbability by a skilful use of this figure: "Quem igitur "cum omnium gratiâ interficere noluit, hunc voluit cum aliquo- "rum querelâ? Quem jure, quem loco, quem tempore, quem im- "punè, non est ausus, hunc injuriâ, iniquo loco, alieno tem- "pore, periculo capitis, non dubitavit occidere?"* In order to render

* "Is it credible that, when he declined putting Clodius to death with the "consent of all, he would choose to do it with the disapprobation of many? "Can you believe that the person whom he scrupled to slay, when he might "have done so with full justice, in a convenient place, at a proper time, with "secure impunity, he made no scruple to murder against justice, in an unfa- "vourable place, at an unseasonable time, and at the risque of capital con- "demnation?"

render an Antitheſis more complete, it is always of advantage, that the words and members of the ſentence, expreſſing the contraſted objects, be, as in this inſtance of Cicero's, ſimilarly conſtructed, and made to correſpond to each other. This leads us to remark the contraſt more, by ſetting the things which we oppoſe more clearly over againſt each other; in the ſame manner as when we contraſt a black and a white object, in order to perceive the full difference of their colour, we would chooſe to have both objects of the ſame bulk, and placed in the ſame light. Their reſemblance to each other, in certain circumſtances, makes their diſagreement in others more palpable. At the ſame time, I muſt obſerve, that the frequent uſe of Antitheſis, eſpecially where the oppoſition in the words is nice and quaint, is apt to render ſtyle diſagreeable. Such a ſentence as the following, from Seneca, does very well, where it ſtands alone: "Si quem volueris eſſe divitem, non eſt quod "augeas divitias, ſed minuas cupiditates."* Or this: "Si ad "naturam vives, nunquam eris pauper; ſi ad opinionem, "nunquam dives."† A maxim, or moral ſaying, properly enough receives this form; both becauſe it is ſuppoſed to be the fruit of meditation, and becauſe it is deſigned to be engraven on the memory, which recals it more eaſily by the help of ſuch contraſted expreſſions. But where a ſtring of ſuch ſentences ſucceed each other; where this becomes an author's favourite and prevailing manner of expreſſing himſelf, his ſtyle is faulty; and it is upon this account Seneca has been often, and juſtly, cenſured. Such a ſtyle appears too ſtudied and laboured; it gives us the impreſſion of an author attending more to his manner of ſaying things, than to the things themſelves which he ſays. Dr. Young, though a writer of real genius, was too fond of Antitheſes. In his Eſtimate of Human Life, we find whole pages that run in ſuch a ſtrain as this: "The peaſant complains aloud; the courtier in ſecret repines. In "want, what diſtreſs? in affluence, what ſatiety? The great "are

* "If you ſeek to make one rich, ſtudy not to increaſe his ſtores, but to di-"miniſh his deſires."

† "If you regulate your deſires according to the ſtandard of nature, you will "never be poor; if according to the ſtandard of opinion, you will never be "rich."

"are under as much difficulty to expend with pleaſure, as the "mean to labour with ſucceſs. The ignorant, through ill-"grounded hope, are diſappointed; the knowing, through "knowledge, deſpond. Ignorance occaſions miſtake; miſtake, "diſappointment; and diſappointment is miſery. Knowledge, "on the other hand, gives true judgment; and true judgment of "human things, gives a demonſtration of their inſufficiency to "our peace." There is too much glitter in ſuch a ſtyle as this, to pleaſe long. We are fatigued, by attending to ſuch quaint and artificial ſentences often repeated.

There is another ſort of Antitheſis, the beauty of which conſiſts in ſurpriſing us by the unexpected contraſts of things which it brings together. Much wit may be ſhewn in this; but it belongs wholly to pieces of profeſſed wit and humour, and can find no place in grave compoſitions. Mr. Pope, who is remarkably fond of Antitheſis, is often happy in this uſe of the figure. So, in his Rape of the Lock:

> Whether the nymph ſhall break Diana's law,
> Or ſome frail China jar receive a flaw;
> Or ſtain her honour, or her new brocade;
> Forget her prayers, or miſs a maſquerade;
> Or loſe her heart, or necklace, at a ball,
> Or whether Heav'n has doom'd that Shock muſt fall.

What is called the point of an epigram, conſiſts, for moſt part, in ſome Antitheſis of this kind; ſurpriſing us with the ſmart and unexpected turn, which it gives to the thought; and in the fewer words it is brought out, it is always the happier.

Compariſons and Antitheſis are figures of a cool nature; the productions of imagination, not of paſſion. (Interrogations and Exclamations, of which I am next to ſpeak, are paſſionate figures.) They are, indeed, on ſo many occaſions, the native language of paſſion, that their uſe is extremely frequent; and in ordinary converſation, when men are heated, they prevail as much as in the moſt ſublime oratory. The unfigured, literal uſe of Interrogation, is to aſk a queſtion; but when men are prompted by paſſion, whatever they would affirm, or deny with great vehemence, they naturally put in the form of a queſtion; expreſſing thereby the ſtrongeſt confidence of the truth of their own ſentiment, and appealing to their hearers for the impoſſibility of

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the contrary. Thus, in ſcripture: "God is not a man, that he "ſhould lie, neither the Son of Man, that he ſhould repent. Hath "he ſaid it? and ſhall he not do it? Hath he ſpoken it? and ſhall "he not make it good?"* So Demoſthenes, addreſſing himſelf to the Athenians: "Tell me, will you ſtill go about and aſk "one another, what news? What can be more aſtoniſhing news "than this, that the man of Macedon makes war upon the "Athenians, and diſpoſes of the affairs of Greece? Is Philip "dead? No, but he is ſick. What ſignifies it to you whether "he be dead or alive? For, if any thing happens to this Phil-"ip, you will immediately raiſe up another." All this, delivered without Interrogation, had been faint and ineffectual; but the warmth and eagerneſs which this queſtioning method expreſſes, awakens the hearers, and ſtrikes them with much greater force.

(Interrogation may often be applied with propriety, in the courſe of no higher emotions than naturally ariſe in purſuing ſome cloſe and earneſt reaſoning. But Exclamations belong only to ſtronger emotions of the mind; to ſurpriſe, admiration, anger, joy, grief, and the like:)

> Heu pietas! heu priſca fides! invictaque bello
> Dextera!

Both Interrogation and Exclamation, and, indeed, all paſſionate figures of ſpeech, operate upon us by means of ſympathy. Sympathy is a very powerful and extenſive principle in our nature, diſpoſing us to enter into every feeling and paſſion, which we behold expreſſed by others. Hence, a ſingle perſon coming into company with ſtrong marks, either of melancholy or joy, upon his countenance, will diffuſe that paſſion, in a moment, through the whole circle. Hence, in a great crowd, paſſions are ſo eaſily caught, and ſo faſt ſpread, by that powerful contagion which the animated looks, cries, and geſtures of a multitude never fail to carry. (Now, Interrogations and Exclamations, being natural ſigns of a moved and agitated mind, always, when they are properly uſed, diſpoſe us to ſympathiſe with the diſpoſitions of thoſe who uſe them, and to feel as they feel.)

From

* Numbers, chap. xxiii. ver. 19.

From this it follows, that the great rule with regard to the conduct of such figures is, that the writer attend to the manner in which nature dictates to us to express any emotion or passion, and that he give his language that turn, and no other; above all, that he never affect the style of a passion which he does not feel. With Interrogations he may use a good deal of freedom; these, as above observed, falling in so much with the ordinary course of language and reasoning, even when no great vehemence is supposed to have place in the mind. But, with respect to Exclamations, he must be more reserved. Nothing has a worse effect than the frequent and unseasonable use of them. Raw, juvenile writers imagine, that, by pouring them forth often, they render their compositions warm and animated. Whereas quite the contrary follows. They render it frigid to excess. When an author is always calling upon us to enter into transports which he has said nothing to inspire, we are both disgusted and enraged at him. He raises no sympathy; for he gives us no passion of his own, in which we can take part. He gives us words, and not passion; and of course, can raise no passion, unless that of indignation. Hence, I incline to think, he was not much mistaken, who said, that when, on looking into a book, he found the pages thick bespangled with the point which is called, "Punctum admirationis," he judged this to be a sufficient reason for his laying it aside. And, indeed, were it not for the help of this "punctum admirationis," with which many writers of the rapturous kind so much abound, one would be often at a loss to discover, whether or not it was Exclamation which they aimed at. For, it has now become a fashion, among these writers, to subjoin points of admiration to sentences, which contain nothing but simple affirmations, or propositions; as if, by an affected method of pointing, they could transform them in the reader's mind into high figures of eloquence. Much akin to this, is another contrivance practised by some writers, of separating almost all the members of the sentences from each other, by blank lines; as if, by setting them thus asunder, they bestowed some special importance upon them; and required us, in going along, to make a pause at every other word, and weigh it well. This, I think, may be called a Typographical Figure of Speech. Neither, indeed, since we

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have been led to mention the arts of writers for increasing the importance of their words, does another cuſtom, which prevailed very much ſome time ago, ſeem worthy of imitation; I mean that of diſtinguiſhing the ſignificant words, in every ſentence, by Italic characters. On ſome occaſions, it is very proper to uſe ſuch diſtinctions. But when we carry them ſo far, as to mark with them every ſuppoſed emphatical word, theſe words are apt to multiply ſo faſt in the authors imagination, that every page is crowed with Italics; which can produce no effect whatever, but to hurt the eye, and create confuſion. Indeed, if the ſenſe point out the moſt emphatical expreſſions, a variation in the type, eſpecially when occurring ſo frequently, will give ſmall aid. And, accordingly, the moſt maſterly writers, of late, have, with good reaſon, laid aſide all thoſe feeble props of ſignificancy, and truſted wholly to the weight of their ſentiments for commanding attention. But to return from this digreſſion:

Another Figure of Speech, proper only to animated and warm compoſition, is what ſome critical writers call Viſion; when, in place of relating ſomething that is paſt, we uſe the preſent tenſe, and deſcribe it as actually paſſing before our eyes. Thus Cicero, in his fourth oration againſt Catiline: "Videor "enim mihi hanc urbem videre, lucem orbis terrarum atque "arcem omnium gentium, ſubito uno incendio concidentem; "cerno animo ſepulta in patria miſeros atque inſepultos acer- "vos civium; verſatur mihi ante oculos aſpectus Cethegi, et "furor, in veſtra cædè bacchantis."* This manner of deſcription ſuppoſes a ſort of enthuſiaſm, which carries the perſon who deſcribes it in ſome meaſure out of himſelf; and, when well executed, muſt needs impreſs the reader or hearer ſtrongly, by the force of that ſympathy which I have before explained. But, in order to a ſucceſsful execution, it requires an uncommonly warm imagination, and ſuch a happy ſelection of circumſtances, as ſhall make us think we ſee before our eyes the ſcene that is deſcribed. Otherwiſe, it ſhares the ſame fate with all feeble attempts towards paſſionate figures; that of throwing ridicule upon

* "I ſeem to myſelf to behold this city, the ornament of the earth, and the "capital of all nations, ſuddenly involved in one conflagration. I ſee before "me the ſlaughtered heaps of citizens lying unburied in the midſt of their "ruined country. The furious countenance of Cethegus riſes to my view, "while with a ſavage joy he is triumphing in your miſeries."

upon the author, and leaving the reader more cool and unintereſted than he was before.) The ſame obſervations are to be applied to Repetition, Suſpenſion, Correction, and many more of thoſe figurative forms of Speech, which rhetoricians have enumerated among the beauties of eloquence. They are beautiful, or not, exactly in proportion as they are native expreſſions of the ſentiment or paſſion intended to be heightened by them. Let nature and paſſion always ſpeak their own language, and they will ſuggeſt figures in abundance. But when we ſeek to counterfeit a warmth which we do not feel, no figures will either ſupply the defect, or conceal the impoſture.

(There is one figure (and I ſhall mention no more) of frequent uſe among all public ſpeakers, particularly at the bar, which Quintilian inſiſts upon conſiderably, and calls Amplification.) (It conſiſts in an artful exaggeration of all the circumſtances of ſome object or action which we want to place in a ſtrong light, either a good or a bad one.) It is not ſo properly one figure, as the ſkilful management of ſeveral which we make to tend to one point. It may be carried on by a proper uſe of magnifying or extenuating terms, by a regular enumeration of particulars, or by throwing together, as into one maſs, a crowd of circumſtances; by ſuggeſting compariſons alſo with things of a like nature. (But the principal inſtrument by which it works, is by a Climax, or a gradual riſe of one circumſtance above another, till our idea be raiſed to the utmoſt.) I ſpoke formerly of a Climax in ſound; a Climax in ſenſe, when well carried on, is a figure which never fails to amplify ſtrongly. The common example of this, is that noted paſſage in Cicero which every ſchool-boy knows: "Facinus eſt vincire civem Romanum; ſce-"lus verberare, prope parricidium, necare; quid dicam in cru-"cem tollere?"* (I ſhall give an inſtance from a printed pleading of a famous Scotch lawyer, Sir George M'Kenzie. It is in a charge to the jury, in the caſe of a woman accuſed of murdering her own child. "Gentlemen, if one man had any how "ſlain another, if an adverſary had killed his oppoſer, or a "woman occaſioned the death of her enemy, even theſe crim-

"inals.

* "It is a crime to put a Roman citizen in bonds; it is the height of guilt "to ſcourge him; little leſs than parricide to put him to death. What name "then ſhall I give to crucifying him?"

" inals would have been capitally puniſhed by the Cornelian " law: but, if this guiltleſs infant, who could make no enemy, " had been murdered by its own nurſe, What puniſhments " would not then the mother have demanded? With what cries " and exclamations would ſhe have ſtunned your ears? What " ſhall we ſay then, when a woman, guilty of homicide, a moth- " er, of the murder of her innocent child, hath compriſed all " thoſe miſdeeds in one ſingle crime; a crime, in its own na- " ture, deteſtable; in a woman prodigious; in a mother, in- " credible; and perpetrated againſt one whoſe age called for " compaſſion, whoſe near relation claimed affection, and whoſe " innocence deſerved the higheſt favour." I muſt take notice, however, that ſuch regular Climaxes as theſe, though they have conſiderable beauty, have, at the ſame time, no ſmall appearance of art and ſtudy; and, therefore, though they may be admitted into formal harangues, yet they ſpeak not the language of great earneſtneſs and paſſion, which ſeldom proceed by ſteps ſo regular. Nor, indeed, for the purpoſes of effectual perſuaſion, are they likely to be ſo ſucceſsful, as an arrangement of circumſtances in a leſs artificial order. For, when much art appears, we are always put on our guard againſt the deceits of eloquence; but when a ſpeaker has reaſoned ſtrongly, and by force of argument, has made good his main point, he may then, taking advantage of the favourable bent of our minds, make uſe of ſuch artificial figures to confirm our belief, and to warm our minds.

LECTURE

LECTURE XVIII.

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE. GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE—DIFFUSE, CONCISE—FEEBLE, NERVOUS—DRY, PLAIN, NEAT, ELEGANT, FLOWERY.

HAVING treated, at conſiderable length, of the Figures of Speech, of their origin, of their nature, and of the management of ſuch of them as are important enough to require a particular diſcuſſion, before finally diſmiſſing this ſubject, I think it incumbent on me, to make ſome obſervations concerning the proper uſe of Figurative Language in general. Theſe, indeed, I have, in part, already anticipated. But, as great errors are often committed in this part of Style, eſpecially by young writers, it may be of uſe that I bring together, under one view, the moſt material directions on this head.

I begin with repeating an obſervation, formerly made, that neither all the beauties, nor even the chief beauties of compoſition, depend upon Tropes and Figures. Some of the moſt ſublime and moſt pathetic paſſages of the moſt admired authors, both in proſe and poetry, are expreſſed in the moſt ſimple Style, without any figure at all; inſtances of which I have before given. On the other hand, a compoſition may abound with theſe ſtudied ornaments; the language may be artful, ſplendid, and highly figured, and yet the compoſition be on the whole frigid and unaffecting. Not to ſpeak of ſentiment and thought, which conſtitute the real and laſting merit of any work, if the Style be ſtiff and affected, if it be deficient in perſpicuity or preciſion, or in eaſe and neatneſs, all the Figures that can be employed will never render it agreeable: they may dazzle a vulgar, but will never pleaſe a judicious, eye.

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In the ſecond place, figures, in order to be beautiful, muſt always riſe naturally from the ſubject. I have ſhown that all of them are the language either of Imagination, or of Paſſion; ſome of them ſuggeſted by Imagination, when it is awakened and ſprightly, ſuch as Metaphors and Compariſons; others by Paſſion or more heated emotion, ſuch as Perſonifications and Apoſtrophes. Of courſe, they are beautiful then only, when they are prompted by fancy, or by paſſion. They muſt riſe of their own accord; they muſt flow from a mind warmed by the object which it ſeeks to deſcribe; we ſhould never interrupt the courſe of thought to caſt about for figures. If they be ſought after coolly, and faſtened on as deſigned ornaments, they will have a miſerable effect. It is a very erroneous idea, which many have of the ornaments of Style, as if they were things detached from the ſubject, and that could be ſtuck to it, like lace upon a coat: this is indeed,

> Purpureus late qui ſplendeat unus et alter
> Aſſuitur pannus.*——— ARS POET.

And it is this falſe idea which has often brought attention to the beauties of writing into diſrepute. Whereas, the real and proper ornaments of Style are wrought into the ſubſtance of it. They flow in the ſame ſtream with the current of thought. A writer of genius conceives his ſubject ſtrongly; his imagination is filled and impreſſed with it; and pours itſelf forth in that Figurative Language which imagination naturally ſpeaks. He puts on no emotion which his ſubject does not raiſe in him; he ſpeaks as he feels; but his Style will be beautiful, becauſe his feelings are lively. On occaſions, when fancy is languid, or finds nothing to rouſe it, we ſhould never attempt to hunt for figures. We then work, as it is ſaid, "invitâ Minervâ;" ſuppoſing figures invented, they will have the appearance of being forced; and in this caſe, they had much better be wanted.

In the third place, even when imagination prompts, and the ſubject naturally gives riſe to figures, they muſt, however, not be employed too frequently. In all beauty, "ſimplex munditiis," is

* "Shreds of purple with broad luſtre ſhine,
"Sew'd on your poem." FRANCIS.

is a capital quality. Nothing derogates more from the weight and dignity of any compoſition, than too great attention to ornament. When the ornaments coſt labour, that labour always appears; though they ſhould coſt us none, ſtill the reader or hearer may be ſurfeited with them; and when they come too thick, they give the impreſſion of a light and frothy genius, that evaporates in ſhew, rather than brings forth what is ſolid. The directions of the ancient critics, on this head, are full of good ſenſe, and deſerve careful attention. "Voluptatibus maximis," ſays Cicero, de Orat. L. iii. "faſtidium finitimum eſt in "rebus omnibus; quo hoc minus in oratione miremur. In"qua vel ex poetis, vel oratoribus poſſumus judicare, concin"nam, ornatam, feſtivam ſine intermiſſione, quamvis claris ſit "coloribus picta, vel poeſis, vel oratio, non poſſe in delecta"tione eſſe diuturnâ. Quare, bene et præclare, quamvis no"bis ſæpe dicatur, belle et feſtive nimium ſæpe nolo."* To the ſame purpoſe, are the excellent directions with which Quintilian concludes his diſcourſe concerning figures, L. ix. C. 3. "Ego illud de iis figuris quæ vere fiunt, adjiciam breviter, "ſicut ornant orationem opportuné poſitæ, ita ineptiſſimas eſſe "cum immodice petuntur. Sunt, qui neglecto rerum pon"dere et viribus ſententiarum, ſi vel inania verba in hos modos "depravarunt, ſummos ſe judicant artifices; ideoque non de"ſinunt eas nectere; quas ſine ſententia ſectare, tam eſt ridic"ulum quam quærere habitum geſtumque ſine corpore. Ne "hæ quidem quæ rectæ fiunt, denſandæ ſunt nimis. Scien"dum imprimis quid quiſque poſtulet locus, quid perſona, "quid tempus. Major enim pars harum figurarum poſita eſt "in delectatione. Ubi verò, atrocitate, invidiâ, miſeratione "pugnandum eſt; quis ferat verbis contrapoſitis, et conſimili"bus, & pariter cadentibus, iraſcentem, flentem, rogantem? "Cum in his rebus, cura verborum deroget affectibus fidem;

"et

* "In all human things, diſguſt borders ſo nearly on the moſt lively pleaſ"ures, that we need not be ſurpriſed to find this hold in eloquence. From "reading either poets or orators, we may eaſily ſatisfy ourſelves, that neither "a poem nor an oration, which, without intermiſſion, is ſhowy and ſparkling, "can pleaſe us long. Wherefore, though we may wiſh for the frequent praiſe "of having expreſſed ourſelves well and properly, we ſhould not covet repeat"ed applauſe, for being bright and ſplendid."

"et ubicunque ars oſtentatur, veritas abeſſe videatur."* After theſe judicious and uſeful obſervations, I have no more to add, on this ſubject, except this admonition:

In the fourth place, that, without a genius for Figurative Language, none ſhould attempt it. Imagination is a power not to be acquired; it muſt be derived from nature. Its redundancies we may prune, its deviations we may correct, its ſphere we may enlarge; but the faculty itſelf we cannot create: and all efforts towards a metaphorical ornamented ſtyle, if we are deſtitute of the proper genius for it, will prove awkward and diſguſting. Let us ſatisfy ourſelves, however, by conſidering, that without this talent, or at leaſt with a very ſmall meaſure of it, we may both write and ſpeak to advantage. Good ſenſe, clear ideas, perſpicuity of language, and proper arrangement of words and thoughts, will always command attention. Theſe are indeed the foundations of all ſolid merit, both in ſpeaking and writing. Many ſubjects require nothing more; and thoſe which admit of ornament, admit it only as a ſecondary requiſite. To ſtudy and to know our own genius well; to follow nature; to ſeek to improve, but not to force it, are directions which cannot be too often given to thoſe who deſire to excel in the liberal arts.

When I entered on the conſideration of Style, I obſerved that words being the copies of our ideas, there muſt always be a very intimate connexion between the manner in which every writer employs words, and his manner of thinking; and that, from the peculiarity of thought and expreſſion which belongs to him, there is a certain character imprinted on his Style, which may be denominated his manner; commonly expreſſed by ſuch general

* "I muſt add, concerning thoſe figures which are proper in themſelves, "that as they beautify a compoſition when they are ſeaſonably introduced, ſo "they deform it greatly, if too frequently ſought after. There are ſome, who, "neglecting ſtrength of ſentiment and weight of matter, if they can only force "their empty words into a figurative ſtyle, imagine themſelves great writers; "and therefore continually ſtring together ſuch ornaments; which is juſt as "ridiculous, where there is no ſentiment to ſupport them, as to contrive geſ- "tures and dreſſes for what wants a body. Even thoſe figures which a ſub- "ject admits, muſt not come too thick. We muſt begin with conſidering what "the occaſion, the time, and the perſon who ſpeaks, render proper. For the "object aimed at by the greater part of theſe figures, is entertainment. But "when the ſubject becomes deeply ſerious, and ſtrong paſſions are to be mov- "ed, who can bear the orator, who, in affected language and balanced phraſes, "endeavours to expreſs wrath, commiſeration, or earneſt entreaty? On all "ſuch occaſions, a ſolicitous attention to words weakens paſſion; and when "ſo much art is ſhown, there is ſuſpected to be little ſincerity."

eral terms, as ſtrong, weak, dry, ſimple, affected, or the like. Theſe diſtinctions carry, in general, ſome reference to an author's manner of thinking, but refer chiefly to his mode of expreſſion. They ariſe from the whole tenour of his language; and comprehend the effect produced by all thoſe parts of Style which we have already conſidered; the choice which he makes of ſingle words; his arrangement of theſe in ſentences; the degree of his preciſion; and his embelliſhment, by means of muſical cadence, figures, or other arts of ſpeech. Of ſuch general characters of Style, therefore, it remains now to ſpeak, as the reſult of thoſe underparts of which I have hitherto treated.

That different ſubjects require to be treated of in different ſorts of Style, is a poſition ſo obvious, that I ſhall not ſtay to illuſtrate it. Every one ſees that treatiſes of philoſophy, for inſtance, ought not to be compoſed in the ſame Style with orations. Every one ſees alſo, that different parts of the ſame compoſition require a variation in the Style and manner. In a ſermon, for inſtance, or any harangue, the application or peroration admits more ornament, and requires more warmth, than the didactic part. But what I mean at preſent to remark is, that amidſt this variety, we ſtill expect to find, in the compoſitions of any one man, ſome degree of uniformity or conſiſtency with himſelf in manner; we expect to find ſome predominant character of Style impreſſed on all his writings, which ſhall be ſuited to, and ſhall mark his particular genius, and turn of mind. The orations in Livy differ much in Style, as they ought to do, from the reſt of his hiſtory. The ſame is the caſe with thoſe in Tacitus. Yet both in Livy's orations, and in thoſe of Tacitus, we are able clearly to trace the diſtinguiſhing manner of each hiſtorian; the magnificent fulneſs of the one, and the ſententious conciſeneſs of the other. The "Lettres Perſanes," and "L'Eſprit des Loix," are the works of the ſame author. They required very different compoſition ſurely, and accordingly they differ widely; yet ſtill we ſee the ſame hand. Wherever there is real and native genius, it gives a determination to one kind of Style rather than another. Where nothing of this appears; where there is no marked nor peculiar character in the compoſitions of any author, we are apt to infer, not without reaſon, that he is a vulgar and trivial author, who writes from imitation, and not from the impulſe of original genius. As

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the moſt celebrated painters are known by their hand, ſo the beſt and moſt original writers are known and diſtinguiſhed, throughout all their works, by their Style and peculiar manner. This will be found to hold almoſt without exception.

The ancient critics attended to theſe general characters of Style which we are now to conſider. Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus divides them into three kinds; and calls them the Auſtere, the Florid, and the Middle. By the Auſtere, he means a Style diſtinguiſhed for ſtrength and firmneſs, with a neglect of ſmoothneſs and ornament; for examples of which, he gives Pindar and Æſchylus among the poets, and Thucydides among the proſe writers. By the Florid, he means, as the name indicates, a Style ornamented, flowing, and ſweet; reſting more upon numbers and grace, than ſtrength; he inſtances Heſiod, Sappho, Anacreon, Euripides, and principally Iſocrates. The Middle kind is the juſt mean between theſe, and comprehends the beauties of both; in which claſs he places Homer and Sophocles among the poets; in proſe, Herodotus, Demoſthenes, Plato, and (what ſeems ſtrange) Ariſtotle. This muſt be a very wide claſs indeed, which comprehends Plato and Ariſtotle under one article as to Style.* Cicero and Quintilian make alſo a threefold diviſion of Style, though with reſpect to different qualities of it; in which they are followed by moſt of the modern writers on rhetoric; the *Simplex*, *Tenue*, or *Subtile*; the *Grave* or *Vehemens*; and the *Medium*, or, *temperatum genus dicendi*. But theſe diviſions, and the illuſtrations they give of them, are ſo looſe and general, that they cannot advance us much in our ideas of Style. I ſhall endeavour to be a little more particular in what I have to ſay on this ſubject.

One of the firſt and moſt obvious diſtinctions of the different kinds of Style, is what ariſes from an author's ſpreading out his thoughts more or leſs. This diſtinction forms, what are called the Diffuſe and the Conciſe Styles. A conciſe writer compreſſes his thought into the feweſt poſſible words; he ſeeks to employ none but ſuch as are moſt expreſſive; he lops off, as redundant, every expreſſion which does not add ſomething material to the ſenſe. Ornament he does not reject; he may be lively and figured; but his ornament is intended for the ſake of force, rather than grace. He never gives you the ſame thought

* De Compoſitione Verborum, Cap. 25.

thought twice. He places it in the light which appears to him the moſt ſtriking; but if you do not apprehend it well in that light, you need not expect to find it in any other. His ſentences are arranged with compactneſs and ſtrength, rather than with cadence and harmony. The utmoſt preciſion is ſtudied in them; and they are commonly deſigned to ſuggeſt more to the reader's imagination than they directly expreſs.

A diffuſe writer unfolds his thought fully. He places it in a variety of lights, and gives the reader every poſſible aſſiſtance for underſtanding it completely. He is not very careful to expreſs it at firſt in its full ſtrength; becauſe he is to repeat the impreſſion; and what he wants in ſtrength, he propoſes to ſupply by copiouſneſs. Writers of this character generally love magnificence and amplification. Their periods naturally run out into ſome length, and having room for ornament of every kind, they admit it freely.

Each of theſe manners has its peculiar advantages; and each becomes faulty when carried to the extreme. The extreme of Conciſeneſs becomes abrupt and obſcure; it is apt alſo to lead into a Style too pointed, and bordering on the epigrammatic. The extreme Diffuſeneſs becomes weak and languid, and tires the reader. However, to one or other of theſe two manners, a writer may lean according as his genius prompts him: and under the general character of a conciſe, or of a more open and diffuſe Style, may poſſeſs much beauty in his compoſition.

For illuſtrations of theſe general characters, I can only refer to the writers who are examples of them. It is not ſo much from detached paſſages, ſuch as I was wont formerly to quote for inſtances, as from the current of an author's Style, that we are to collect the idea of a formed manner of writing. The two moſt remarkable examples that I know, of Conciſeneſs carried as far as propriety will allow, perhaps in ſome caſes farther, are Tacitus the hiſtorian, and the Preſident Monteſquieu in "L'Eſprit des Loix." Ariſtotle too holds an eminent rank among didactic writers for his brevity. Perhaps no writer in the world was ever ſo frugal of his words as Ariſtotle; but this frugality of expreſſion frequently darkens his meaning. Of a beautiful and magnificent Diffuſeneſs, Cicero is, beyond doubt, the moſt illuſtrious inſtance that can be given. Addiſon,

ſon, alſo, and Sir William Temple, come, in ſome degree, under this claſs.

In judging when it is proper to lean to the conciſe, and when to the diffuſe manner, we muſt be directed by the nature of the compoſition. Diſcourſes that are to be ſpoken, require a more copious Style, than books that are to be read. When the whole meaning muſt be catched from the mouth of the ſpeaker, without the advantage which books afford of pauſing at pleaſure, and reviewing what appears obſcure, great Conciſeneſs is always to be avoided. We ſhould never preſume too much on the quickneſs of our hearers' underſtanding; but our Style ought to be ſuch, that the bulk of men can go along with us eaſily, and without effort. A flowing copious Style, therefore, is required in all public ſpeakers; guarding, at the ſame time, againſt ſuch a degree of Diffuſion, as renders them languid and tireſome; which will always prove the caſe, when they inculcate too much, and preſent the ſame thought under too many different views.

In written compoſitions, a certain degree of Conciſeneſs poſſeſſes great advantages. It is more lively; keeps up attention; makes a briſker and ſtronger impreſſion; and gratifies the mind by ſupplying more exerciſe to a reader's own thought. A ſentiment, which, expreſſed diffuſely, will barely be admitted to be juſt, expreſſed conciſely, will be admired as ſpirited. Deſcription, when we want to have it vivid and animated, ſhould be in a conciſe ſtrain. This is different from the common opinion; moſt perſons being ready to ſuppoſe, that upon deſcription a writer may dwell more ſafely than upon other things, and that by a full and extended Style, it is rendered more rich and expreſſive. I apprehend, on the contrary, that a diffuſe manner generally weakens it. Any redundant words or circumſtances encumber the fancy, and make the object we preſent to it, appear confuſed and indiſtinct. Accordingly, the moſt maſterly deſcribers, Homer, Tacitus, Milton, are almoſt always conciſe in their deſcriptions. They ſhew us more of an object at one glance, than a feeble diffuſe writer can ſhow, by turning it round and round in a variety of lights. The ſtrength and vivacity of deſcription, whether in proſe or poetry, depend much more upon the happy choice of one or two ſtriking circumſtances, than upon the multiplication of them.

Addreſſes

Addreſſes to the paſſions, likewiſe, ought to be in the conciſe, rather than the diffuſe manner. In theſe, it is dangerous to be diffuſe, becauſe it is very difficult to ſupport proper warmth for any length of time. When we become prolix, we are always in hazard of cooling the reader. The heart, too, and the fancy run faſt; and if once we can put them in motion, they ſupply many particulars to greater advantage than an author can diſplay them. The caſe is different, when we addreſs ourſelves to the underſtanding; as in all matters of reaſoning, explication, and inſtruction. There I would prefer a more free and diffuſe manner. When you are to ſtrike the fancy, or to move the heart, be conciſe; when you are to inform the underſtanding, which moves more ſlowly, and requires the aſſiſtance of a guide, it is better to be full. Hiſtorical narration may be beautiful, either in a conciſe or diffuſe manner, according to the writer's genius. Livy and Herodotus are diffuſe; Thucydides and Salluſt are ſuccinct; yet all of them agreeable.

I obſerved that a diffuſe Style inclines moſt to long periods; and a conciſe writer, it is certain, will often employ ſhort ſentences. It is not, however, to be inferred from this, that long or ſhort ſentences are fully characteriſtical of the one or the other manner. It is very poſſible for one to compoſe always in ſhort ſentences, and to be withal extremely diffuſe, if a ſmall meaſure of ſentiment be ſpread through many of theſe ſentences. Seneca is a remarkable example. By the ſhortneſs and quaintneſs of his ſentences, he may appear at firſt view very conciſe; yet he is far from being ſo. He transfigures the ſame thought into many different forms. He makes it paſs for a new one, only by giving it a new turn. So alſo, moſt of the French writers compoſe in ſhort ſentences; though their Style, in general, is not conciſe; commonly leſs ſo than the bulk of Engliſh writers, whoſe ſentences are much longer. A French author breaks down into two or three ſentences, that portion of thought which an Engliſh author crowds into one. The direct effect of ſhort ſentences, is to render the Style briſk and lively, but not always conciſe. By the quick ſucceſſive impulſes which they make on the mind, they keep it awake; and give to compoſition more of a ſpirited character. Long periods,

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like Lord Clarendon's, are grave and ſtately; but, like all grave things, they are in hazard of becoming dull. An intermixture of both long and ſhort ones is requiſite, when we would ſupport ſolemnity, together with vivacity; leaning more to the one or the other, according as propriety requires that the ſolemn or the ſprightly ſhould be predominant in our compoſition. But of long and ſhort ſentences, I had occaſion, formerly, to treat, under the head of the conſtruction of periods.

The Nervous and the Feeble, are generally held to be characters of Style, of the ſame import with the Conciſe and the Diffuſe. They do indeed very often coincide. Diffuſe writers have for the moſt part ſome degree of feebleneſs; and nervous writers will generally be inclined to a conciſe expreſſion. This, however, does not always hold; and there are inſtances of writers, who, in the midſt of a full and ample ſtyle, have maintained a great degree of ſtrength. Livy is an example; and in the Engliſh Language, Dr. Barrow. Barrow's Style has many faults. It is unequal, incorrect and redundant; but withal, for force and expreſſiveneſs, uncommonly diſtinguiſhed. On every ſubject, he multiplies words with an overflowing copiouſneſs; but it is always a torrent of ſtrong ideas and ſignificant expreſſions which he pours forth. Indeed, the foundations of a nervous or a weak ſtyle are laid in an author's manner of thinking. If he conceives an object ſtrongly, he will expreſs it with energy: but, if he has only an indiſtinct view of his ſubject; if his ideas be looſe and wavering; if his genius be ſuch, or, at the time of his writing, ſo careleſsly exerted, that he has no firm hold of the conception which he would communicate to us; the marks of all this will clearly appear in his Style. Several unmeaning words and looſe epithets will be found; his expreſſions will be vague and general; his arrangement indiſtinct and feeble; we ſhall conceive ſomewhat of his meaning, but our conception will be faint. Whereas a nervous writer, whether he employs an extended or a conciſe Style, gives us always a ſtrong impreſſion of his meaning; his mind is full of his ſubject, and his words are all expreſſive; every phraſe and every figure which he uſes, tends to render the picture, which he would ſet before us, more lively and complete.

I obſerved under the head of Diffuſe and Conciſe Style, that an author might lean either to the one or to the other, and yet be beautiful. This is not the caſe with reſpect to the Nervous and the feeble. Every author, in every compoſition, ought to ſtudy to expreſs himſelf with ſome ſtrength, and, in proportion, as he approaches to the Feeble, he becomes a bad writer. In all kinds of writing, however, the ſame degree of ſtrength is not demanded. But the more grave and weighty any compoſition is, the more ſhould a character of ſtrength predominate in the Style. Hence in hiſtory, philoſophy, and ſolemn diſcourſes, it is expected moſt. One of the moſt complete models of a Nervous Style, is Demoſthenes in his orations.

As every good quality in Style has an extreme, when purſued to which it becomes faulty, this holds of the Nervous Style as well as others. Too great a ſtudy of ſtrength, to the neglect of the other qualities of Style, is found to betray writers into a harſh manner. Harſhneſs ariſes from unuſual words, from forced inverſions in the conſtruction of a ſentence, and too much neglect of ſmoothneſs and eaſe. This is reckoned the fault of ſome of our earlieſt claſſics in the Engliſh Language; ſuch as Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir Francis Bacon, Hooker, Chillingworth, Milton in his proſe works, Harrington, Cudworth, and other writers of conſiderable note in the days of Queen Elizabeth, James I. and Charles I. Theſe writers had nerves and ſtrength in a high degree, and are to this day eminent for that quality in Style. But the language in their hands was exceedingly different from what it is now, and was indeed entirely formed upon the idiom and conſtruction of the Latin in the arrangement of ſentences. Hooker, for inſtance, begins the preface to his celebrated work of Eccleſiaſtical Polity, with the following ſentence: "Though for no other cauſe, yet for this, "that poſterity may know we have not looſely, through ſilence, "permitted things to paſs away as in a dream, there ſhall be, for "men's information, extant this much, concerning the preſent "ſtate of the church of God eſtabliſhed amongſt us, and their "careful endeavours which would have upheld the ſame." Such a ſentence now ſounds harſh in our ears. Yet ſome advantages certainly attended this ſort of Style; and whether we have gained, or loſt, upon the whole, by departing from it, may bear a queſtion. By the freedom of arrangement, which

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it permitted, it rendered the Language ſuſceptible of more ſtrength, of more variety of collocation, and more harmony of period. But however this be, ſuch a ſtyle is now obſolete; and no modern writer could adopt it without the cenſure of harſhneſs and affectation. The preſent form which the Language has aſſumed, has, in ſome meaſure, ſacrificed the ſtudy of ſtrength to that of perſpicuity and eaſe. Our arrangement of words has become leſs forcible, perhaps, but more plain and natural: and this is now underſtood to be the genius of our Language.

The reſtoration of king Charles II. ſeems to be the æra of the formation of our preſent Style. Lord Clarendon was one of the firſt who laid aſide thoſe frequent inverſions which prevailed among writers of the former age. After him, Sir William Temple poliſhed the Language ſtill more. But the author, who, by the number and reputation of his works, formed it more than any one, into its preſent ſtate, is Dryden. Dryden began to write at the Reſtoration, and continued long an author both in poetry and proſe. He had made the Language his ſtudy; and though he wrote haſtily, and often incorrectly, and his Style is not free from faults, yet there is a richneſs in his diction, a copiouſneſs, eaſe, and variety in his expreſſion, which has not been ſurpaſſed by any who have come after him.* Since his time, conſiderable attention has been paid to Purity and Elegance of Style: but it is Elegance, rather than Strength, that forms the diſtinguiſhing quality of moſt of the good Engliſh writers. Some of them compoſe in a more manly and nervous manner than others; but, whether it be from the genius of our Language, or from whatever other cauſe, it appears to me, that we are far from the ſtrength of ſeveral of the Greek and Roman authors.

Hitherto we have conſidered Style under thoſe characters that reſpect its expreſſiveneſs of an author's meaning. Let us

* Dr. Johnſon, in his life of Dryden, gives the following character of his proſe Style: "His prefaces have not the formality of a ſettled Style, in which "the firſt half of the ſentence betrays the other. The clauſes are never bal-"anced, nor the periods modelled; every word ſeems to drop by chance, "though it falls into its proper place. Nothing is cold or languid; the whole "is airy, animated and vigorous; what is little is gay; what is great, is ſplen-"did. Though all is eaſy, nothing is feeble; though all ſeems careleſs, there "is nothing harſh; and though, ſince his earlier works, more than a century "has paſſed, they have nothing yet uncouth or obſolete."

us now proceed to conſider it in another view, with reſpect to the degree of ornament employed to beautify it. Here, the Style of different authors ſeems to riſe, in the following gradation: a Dry, a Plain, a Neat, an Elegant, a Flowery manner. Of each of theſe in their order:

Firſt, a Dry manner. This excludes all ornament of every kind. Content with being underſtood, it has not the leaſt aim to pleaſe, either the fancy or the ear. This is tolerable only in pure didactic writing; and even there, to make us bear it, great weight and ſolidity of matter is requiſite; and entire perſpicuity of Language. Ariſtotle is the thorough example of a Dry Style. Never, perhaps, was there any author who adhered ſo rigidly to the ſtrictneſs of a didactic manner, throughout all his writings, and conveyed ſo much inſtruction without the leaſt approach to ornament. With the moſt profound genius, and extenſive views, he writes like a pure intelligence, who addreſſes himſelf ſolely to the underſtanding, without making any uſe of the channel of the imagination. But this is a manner which deſerves not to be imitated. For, although the goodneſs of the matter may compenſate the dryneſs or harſhneſs of the Style, yet is that dryneſs a conſiderable defect; as it fatigues attention, and conveys our ſentiments with diſadvantage to the reader or hearer.

A Plain Style riſes one degree above a Dry one. A writer of this character, employs very little ornament of any kind, and reſts, almoſt, entirely upon his ſenſe. But, if he is at no pains to engage us by the employment of figures, muſical arrangement, or any other art of writing, he ſtudies, however, to avoid diſguſting us like a dry and a harſh writer. Beſides Perſpicuity, he purſues Propriety, Purity, and Preciſion, in his Language; which form one degree, and no inconſiderable one, of beauty. Livelineſs, too, and force, may be conſiſtent with a very Plain Style: and, therefore, ſuch an author, if his ſentiments be good, may be abundantly agreeable. The difference between a Dry and a Plain writer, is, that the former is incapable of ornament, and ſeems not to know what it is; the latter ſeeks not after it. He gives us his meaning, in good Language, diſtinct and pure; any further ornament he gives himſelf no trouble about; either, becauſe he thinks it unneceſſary

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to his ſubject; or, becauſe his genius does not lead him to delight in it; or, becauſe it leads him to deſpiſe it.*

This laſt was the caſe with Dean Swift, who may be placed at the head of thoſe that have employed the Plain Style. Few writers have diſcovered more capacity. He treats every ſubject which he handles, whether ſerious or ludicrous, in a maſterly manner. He knew, almoſt, beyond any man, the Purity, the Extent, the Preciſion of the Engliſh Language; and, therefore, to ſuch as wiſh to attain a pure and correct Style, he is one of the moſt uſeful models. But we muſt not look for much ornament and grace in his Language. His haughty and moroſe genius, made him deſpiſe any embelliſhment of this kind as beneath his dignity. He delivers his ſentiments in a plain, downright, poſitive manner, like one who is ſure he is in the right; and is very indifferent whether you be pleaſed or not. His ſentences are commonly negligently arranged; diſtinctly enough as to the ſenſe; but, without any regard to ſmoothneſs of ſound; often without much regard to compactneſs, or elegance. If a metaphor, or any other figure, chanced to render his ſatire more poignant, he would, perhaps, vouchſafe to adopt it, when it came in his way; but if it tended only to embelliſh and illuſtrate, he would rather throw it aſide. Hence, in his ſerious pieces, his ſtyle often borders upon the dry and unpleaſing; in his humorous ones, the plainneſs of his manner gives his wit a ſingular edge, and ſets it off to the higheſt advantage. There is no froth, nor affectation in it; it flows without any ſtudied preparation; and while he hardly appears to ſmile himſelf, he makes his reader laugh heartily. To a writer of ſuch a genius as Dean Swift, the Plain Style was moſt admirably fitted. Among our philoſophical writers, Mr. Locke comes under this claſs; perſpicuous and pure, but almoſt without any ornament whatever. In works which admit, or require, ever ſo much ornament, there are parts where the plain manner ought to predominate. But we muſt remember, that when this is the character which a writer affects throughout his whole

* On this head, of the General Characters of Style, particularly the Plain and the Simple, and the characters of thoſe Engliſh authors who are claſſed under them, in this, and the following Lecture, ſeveral ideas have been taken from a manuſcript treatiſe on rhetoric, part of which was ſhewn to me, many years ago, by the learned and ingenious author, Dr. Adam Smith; and which, it is hoped, will be given by him to the public.

whole compoſition, great weight of matter, and great force of ſentiment, are required, in order to keep up the reader's attention, and prevent him from tiring of the author.

What is called a Neat Style comes next in order; and here we are got into the region of ornament; but that ornament not of the higheſt or moſt ſparkling kind. A writer of this character ſhows, that he does not deſpiſe the beauty of Language. It is an object of his attention. But his attention is ſhown in the choice of his words, and in a graceful collocation of them; rather than in any high efforts of imagination, or eloquence. His ſentences are always clean, and free from the incumbrance of ſuperfluous words; of a moderate length; rather inclining to brevity, than a ſwelling ſtructure; cloſing with propriety; without any tails, or adjections dragging after the proper cloſe. His cadence is varied; but not of the ſtudied muſical kind. His figures, if he uſes any, are ſhort and correct, rather than bold and glowing. Such a Style as this may be attained by a writer who has no great powers of fancy or genius; by induſtry merely, and careful attention to the rules of writing; and it is a Style always agreeable. It imprints a character of moderate elevation on our compoſition, and carries a decent degree of ornament, which is not unſuitable to any ſubject whatever. A familiar letter, or a law paper, on the drieſt ſubject, may be written with neatneſs; and a ſermon, or a philoſophical treatiſe, in a Neat Style, will be read with pleaſure.

An Elegant Style is a character, expreſſing a higher degree of ornament than a Neat one; and, indeed, is the term uſually applied to Style, when poſſeſſing all the virtues of ornament, without any of its exceſſes or defects. From what has been formerly delivered, it will eaſily be underſtood, that complete Elegance implies great perſpicuity and propriety; purity in the choice of words, and care and dexterity in their harmonious and happy arrangement. It implies, farther, the grace and beauty of imagination ſpread over Style, as far as the ſubject admits it; and all the illuſtration which Figurative Language adds, when properly employed. In a word, an Elegant writer is one who pleaſes the fancy and the ear, while he informs the underſtanding; and who gives us his ideas clothed with all the beauty of expreſſion, but not overcharged with any of its miſ-

placed

placed finery. In this claſs, therefore, we place only the firſt rate writers in the Language; ſuch as, Addiſon, Dryden, Pope, Temple, Bolingbroke, Atterbury, and a few more: writers who differ widely from one another in many of the attributes of Style, but whom we now claſs together, under the denomination of Elegant, as, in the ſcale of Ornament, poſſeſſing nearly the ſame place.

When the ornaments applied to Style, are too rich and gaudy in proportion to the ſubject; when they return upon us too faſt, and ſtrike us either with a dazzling luſtre, or a falſe brilliancy, this forms what is called a Florid Style; a term commonly uſed to ſignify the exceſs of ornament. In a young compoſer this is very pardonable. Perhaps, it is even a promiſing ſymptom in young people, that their Style ſhould incline to the Florid and Luxuriant; "Volo ſe efferat in adoleſcente "fecunditas," ſays Quintilian, "multum inde decoquent anni, "multum ratio limabit, aliquid velut uſu ipſo deteretur; ſit "modo unde excidi poſſit quid et exculpi. Audeat hæc ætas "plura, et inveniat et inventis gaudeat; ſint licet illa non ſatis "interim ſicca et ſeveta. Facile remedium eſt ubertatis: ſteriilia nullo labore vincuntur."* But, although the Florid Style may be allowed to youth, in their firſt eſſays, it muſt not receive the ſame indulgence from writers of maturer years. It is to be expected, that judgment, as it ripens, ſhould chaſten imagination, and reject, as juvenile, all ſuch ornaments as are redundant, unſuitable to the ſubject, or not conducive to illuſtrate it. Nothing can be more contemptible than that tinſel ſplendor of Language, which ſome writers perpetually affect. It were well, if this could be aſcribed to the real overflowing of a rich imagination. We ſhould then have ſomething to amuſe us, at leaſt, if we found little to inſtruct us. But the worſt is, that with thoſe frothy writers, it is a luxuriancy of words, not of fancy. We ſee a laboured attempt to riſe to a ſplendour of compoſition, of which they have formed to themſelves ſome looſe idea; but

* "In youth, I wiſh to ſee luxuriancy of fancy appear. Much of it will be "diminiſhed by years; much will be corrected by ripening judgment; ſome of "it, by the mere practice of compoſition, will be worn away. Let there be only "ſufficient matter, at firſt, that can bear ſome pruning and lopping off. At "this time of life, let genius be bold and inventive, and pride itſelf in its efforts; though theſe ſhould not, as yet, be correct. Luxuriancy can eaſily be cured; but for barrenneſs there is no remedy."

but having no ſtrength of genius for attaining it, they endeavour to ſupply the defect by poetical words, by cold exclamations, by common-place figures, and every thing that has the appearance of pomp and magnificence. It has eſcaped theſe writers, that ſobriety in ornament, is one great ſecret for rendering it pleaſing; and that, without a foundation of good ſenſe and ſolid thought, the moſt Florid Style is but a childiſh impoſition on the public. The public, however, are but too apt to be ſo impoſed on; at leaſt, the mob of readers, who are very ready to be caught, at firſt, with whatever is dazzling and gaudy.

I cannot help thinking, that it reflects more honour on the religious turn, and good diſpoſitions of the preſent age, than on the public taſte, that Mr. Hervey's Meditations have had ſo great a currency. The pious and benevolent heart, which is always diſplayed in them, and the lively fancy which, on ſome occaſions, appears, juſtly merits applauſe: but the perpetual glitter of expreſſion, the ſwoln imagery, and ſtrained deſcription which abound in them, are ornaments of a falſe kind. I would, therefore, adviſe ſtudents of oratory to imitate Mr. Hervey's piety, rather than his Style; and, in all compoſitions of a ſerious kind, to turn their attention, as Mr. Pope ſays, "from "ſounds to things, from fancy to the heart." Admonitions of this kind, I have already had occaſion to give, and may hereafter repeat them; as I conceive nothing more incumbent on me in this courſe of Lectures, than to take every opportunity of cautioning my readers againſt the affected and frivolous uſe of ornament; and, inſtead of that ſlight and ſuperficial taſte in writing, which I apprehend to be at preſent too faſhionable, to introduce, as far as my endeavours can avail, a taſte for more ſolid thought, and more manly ſimplicity in Style.

LECTURE

LECTURE XIX.

GENERAL CHARACTERS OF STYLE—SIMPLE, AFFECTED, VEHEMENT. DIRECTIONS FOR FORMING A PROPER STYLE.

HAVING entered in the laſt Lecture on the conſideration of the General Characters of Style, I treated of the conciſe and diffuſe, the nervous and feeble manner. I conſidered Style alſo, with relation to the different degrees of ornament employed to beautify it, in which view, the manner of different authors riſes according to the following gradation: Dry, Plain, Neat, Elegant, Flowery.

I am next to treat of Style under another character, one of great importance in writing, and which requires to be accurately examined, that of Simplicity, or a Natural Style, as diſtinguiſhed from Affectation. Simplicity, applied to writing, is a term very frequently uſed; but, like many other critical terms, often uſed looſely, and without preciſion. This has been owing chiefly to the different meanings given to the word Simplicity, which, therefore, it will be neceſſary here to diſtinguiſh; and to ſhew in what ſenſe it is a proper attribute of Style. We may remark four different acceptations in which it is taken.

The firſt is, Simplicity of Compoſition, as oppoſed to too great a variety of parts. Horace's precept refers to this:

Denique ſit quod vis ſimplex dumtaxat et unum.*

This is the Simplicity of plan in a tragedy, as diſtinguiſhed from double plots, and crowded incidents; the Simplicity of the Iliad, or Æneid, in oppoſition to the digreſſions of Lucan,

* "Then learn the wand'ring humour to control,
"And keep one equal tenour through the whole." FRANCIS.

and the ſcattered tales of Arioſto; the Simplicity of Grecian architecture, in oppoſition to the irregular variety of the Gothic. In this ſenſe, Simplicity is the ſame with Unity.

The ſecond ſenſe is Simplicity of Thought, as oppoſed to Refinement. Simple thoughts are what ariſe naturally; what the occaſion, or the ſubject ſuggeſt unſought; and what, when once ſuggeſted, are eaſily apprehended by all. Refinement in writing, expreſſes a leſs natural and obvious train of thought, and which it required a peculiar turn of genius to purſue; within certain bounds very beautiful; but when carried too far, approaching to intricacy, and hurting us by the appearance of being *recherché*, or far ſought. Thus, we would naturally ſay, that Mr. Parnell is a poet of far greater Simplicity, in his turn of thought, than Mr. Cowley; Cicero's thoughts on moral ſubjects are natural; Seneca's too refined and laboured. In theſe two ſenſes of Simplicity, when it is oppoſed, either to variety of parts, or to refinement of thought, it has no proper relation to Style.

There is a third ſenſe of Simplicity, in which it has reſpect to Style; and ſtands oppoſed to too much ornament, or pomp of Language; as when we ſay, Mr. Locke is a ſimple, Mr Hervey a florid, writer; and it is in this ſenſe, that the "*ſimplex*," the "*tenue*," or "*ſubtile genus dicendi*," is underſtood by Cicero and Quintilian. The Simple Style, in this ſenſe, coincides with the Plain or the Neat Style, which I before mentioned; and, therefore, requires no farther illuſtration.

But there is a fourth ſenſe of Simplicity, alſo, reſpecting Style; but not reſpecting the degree of ornament employed, ſo much as the eaſy and natural manner in which our Language expreſſes our thoughts. This is quite different from the former ſenſe of the word juſt now mentioned, in which Simplicity was equivalent to plainneſs: whereas, in this ſenſe, it is compatible with the higheſt ornament. Homer, for inſtance, poſſeſſes this Simplicity in the greateſt perfection; and yet no writer has more Ornament and Beauty. This Simplicity, which is what we are now to conſider, ſtands oppoſed, not to Ornament, but to Affectation of Ornament, or appearance of labour about our Style; and it is a diſtinguiſhing excellency in writing.

A writer

A writer of Simplicity expreſſes himſelf in ſuch a manner, that every one thinks he could have written in the ſame way; Horace deſcribes it,

——————————ut ſibi quivis
Speret idem, ſudet multum, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem.*

There are no marks of art in his expreſſion; it ſeems the very language of nature; you ſee in the Style, not the writer and his labour, but the man in his own natural character. He may be rich in his expreſſion; he may be full of figures, and of fancy; but theſe flow from him without effort; and he appears to write in this manner, not becauſe he has ſtudied it, but becauſe it is the manner of expreſſion moſt natural to him. A certain degree of negligence, alſo, is not inconſiſtent with this character of Style, and even not ungraceful in it; for too minute an attention to words is foreign to it: "Habeat ille," ſays Cicero, (Orat. No. 77.) "molle quiddam, et quod indicet non ingratam "negligentiam hominis, de re magis quam de verbo laborantis."† This is the great advantage of Simplicity of Style, that, like Simplicity of manners, it ſhows us a man's ſentiments and turn of mind laid open without diſguiſe. More ſtudied and artificial manners of writing, however beautiful, have always this diſadvantage, that they exhibit an author in form, like a man at court, where the ſplendor of dreſs, and the ceremonial of behaviour, conceal thoſe peculiarities which diſtinguiſh one man from another. But reading an author of Simplicity, is like converſing with a perſon of diſtinction at home, and with eaſe, where we find natural manners, and a marked character.

The higheſt degree of this Simplicity, is expreſſed by a French term, to which we have none that fully anſwers in our Language, *naïveté*. It is not eaſy to give a preciſe idea of the import of this word. It always expreſſes a diſcovery of character. I believe the beſt account of it is given by a French critic,

M. Marmontel,

*"From well-known tales ſuch fictions would I raiſe,
"As all might hope to imitate with eaſe;
"Yet while they ſtrive the ſame ſucceſs to gain,
"Should find their labours, and their hopes in vain." FRANCIS.

† "Let this Style have a certain ſoftneſs and eaſe, which ſhall character "negligence, not unpleaſing in an author, who appears to be more ſo "about the thought than the expreſſion."

M. Marmontel, who explains it thus: That ſort of amiable ingenuity, or undiſguiſed openneſs, which ſeems to give us ſome degree of ſuperiority over the perſon who ſhews it; a certain infantine Simplicity, which we love in our hearts, but which diſplays ſome features of the character that we think we could have art enough to hide; and which, therefore, always leads us to ſmile at the perſon who diſcovers this character. La Fontaine, in his Fables, is given as the great example of ſuch *naïveté*. This, however, is to be underſtood, as deſcriptive of a particular ſpecies only of Simplicity.

With reſpect to Simplicity in general, we may remark, that the ancient original writers are always the moſt eminent for it. This happens from a plain reaſon, that they wrote from the dictates of natural genius, and were not formed upon the labours and writings of others, which is always in hazard of producing Affectation. Hence, among the Greek writers, we have more models of a beautiful Simplicity than among the Roman. Homer, Heſiod, Anacreon, Theocritus, Herodotus, and Xenophon, are all diſtinguiſhed for it. Among the Romans alſo, we have ſome writers of this character, particularly Terence, Lucretius, Phœdrus, and Julius Cæſar. The following paſſage of Terence's Andria, is a beautiful inſtance of Simplicity of manner in deſcription:

Funus interim
Procedit; ſequimur; ad ſepulchrum venimus;
In ignem impoſita eſt; fletur; interea hæc ſoror
Quam dixi, ad flammam acceſſit improdentius
Satis cum periculo. Ibi tum exanimatus Pamphilus,
Bene diſſimulatum amorem, & celatum indicat;
Occurrit præceps, mulierem ab igne retrahit,
Mea Glycerium, inquit, quid agis? Curte is perditum?
Tum illa, ut conſuetum facile amorem cerneres,
Rejecit ſe in eum, flens quam familiariter.* ACT I. Sc. I.

All

* "Meanwhile the funeral proceeds; we follow;
"Come to the ſepulchre: the body's plac'd
"Upon the pile; lamented; whereupon
"This ſiſter, I was ſpeaking of, all wild,
"Ran to the flames with peril of her life,
"There! there! the frighted Pamphilus betrays
"His well diſſembled and long hidden love;
"Runs up, and takes her round the waiſt, and cries;
"Oh! my Glycerium! what is it you do?
"Why, why, endeavour to deſtroy yourſelf?
"Then ſhe, in ſuch a manner, that you thence
"Might eaſily perceive their long long love,
"Threw herſelf back into his arms, and wept,
"Oh! how familiarly! COLMAN.

All the words here are remarkably happy and elegant; and convey a moſt lively picture of the ſcene deſcribed; while, at the ſame time, the Style appears wholly artleſs and unlaboured. Let us, next, conſider ſome Engliſh writers who come under this claſs.

Simplicity is the great beauty of Archbiſhop Tillotſon's manner. Tillotſon has long been admired as an eloquent writer, and a model for preaching. But his eloquence, if we can call it ſuch, has been often miſunderſtood. For, if we include, in the idea of eloquence, vehemence and ſtrength, picturesque deſcription, glowing figures, or correct arrangement of ſentences, in all theſe parts of oratory the Archbiſhop is exceedingly deficient. His Style is always pure, indeed, and perſpicuous, but careleſs and remiſs, too often feeble and languid; little beauty in the conſtruction of his ſentences, which are frequently ſuffered to drag unharmoniouſly; ſeldom any attempt towards ſtrength or ſublimity. But, notwithſtanding theſe defects, ſuch a conſtant vein of good ſenſe and piety runs through his works, ſuch an earneſt and ſerious manner, and ſo much uſeful inſtruction conveyed in a Style ſo pure, natural, and unaffected, as will juſtly recommend him to high regard, as long as the Engliſh Language remains; not, indeed, as a model of the higheſt eloquence, but as a ſimple and amiable writer, whoſe manner is ſtrongly expreſſive of great goodneſs and worth. I obſerved before, that ſimplicity of manner may be conſiſtent with ſome degree of negligence in Style; and it is only the beauty of that Simplicity which makes the negligence of ſuch writers ſeem graceful. But, as appears in the Archbiſhop, negligence may ſometimes be carried ſo far as to impair the beauty of Simplicity, and make it border on a flat and languid manner.

Sir William Temple is another remarkable writer in the Style of Simplicity. In point of ornament and correctneſs, he riſes a degree above Tillotſon; though, for correctneſs, he is not in the higheſt rank. All is eaſy and flowing in him; he is exceedingly harmonious; ſmoothneſs, and what may be called amænity, are the diſtinguiſhing characters of his manner; relaxing, ſometimes, as ſuch a manner will naturally do, into a prolix and remiſs Style. No writer whatever has ſtamped upon his Style, a more lively impreſſion of his own character. In

reading

reading his works, we ſeem engaged in converſation with him; we become thoroughly acquainted with him, not merely as an author, but as a man; and contract a friendſhip for him. He may be claſſed as ſtanding in the middle, between a negligent Simplicity, and the higheſt degree of Ornament, which this character of Style admits.

Of the latter of theſe, the higheſt, moſt correct, and ornamented degree of the ſimple manner, Mr. Addiſon, is, beyond doubt, in the Engliſh Language, the moſt perfect example: and, therefore, though not without ſome faults, he is, on the whole, the ſafeſt model for imitation, and the freeſt from conſiderable defects, which the Language affords. Perſpicuous and pure he is in the higheſt degree; his preciſion, indeed, not very great; yet nearly as great as the ſubjects which he treats of require: the conſtruction of his ſentences eaſy, agreeable, and commonly very muſical; carrying a character of ſmoothneſs, more than of ſtrength. In figurative Language, he is rich; particularly, in ſimiles and metaphors; which are ſo employed, as to render his Style ſplendid without being gaudy. There is not the leaſt Affectation in his manner; we ſee no marks of labour; nothing forced or conſtrained; but great elegance joined with great eaſe and Simplicity. He is, in particular, diſtinguiſhed by a character of modeſty, and of politeneſs, which appears in all his writings. No author has a more popular and inſinuating manner; and the great regard which he every where ſhews for virtue and religion, recommends him highly. If he fails in any thing, it is in want of ſtrength and preciſion, which renders his manner, though perfectly ſuited to ſuch eſſays as he writes in the Spectator, not altogether a proper model for any of the higher and more elaborate kinds of compoſition. Though the public have ever done much juſtice to his merit, yet the nature of his merit has not always been ſeen in its true light: for, though his poetry be elegant, he certainly bears a higher rank among the proſe writers, than he is entitled to among the poets; and, in proſe, his humour is of a much higher, and more original ſtrain, than his philoſophy. The character of Sir Roger de Coverly diſcovers more genius than the critique on Milton.

Such

Such authors as thoſe, whoſe characters I have been giving, one never tires of reading. There is nothing in their manner that ſtrains or fatigues our thoughts: we are pleaſed, without being dazzled by their luſtre. So powerful is the charm of Simplicity, in an author of real genius, that it atones for many defects, and reconciles us to many a careleſs expreſſion. Hence, in all the moſt excellent authors, both in proſe and verſe, the ſimple and natural manner may be always remarked; although other beauties being predominant, this form not their peculiar and diſtinguiſhing character. Thus Milton is ſimple in the midſt of all his grandeur; and Demoſthenes in the midſt of all his vehemence. To grave and ſolemn writings, Simplicity of manner adds the more venerable air. Accordingly, this has often been remarked as the prevailing character throughout all the ſacred Scriptures: and indeed no other character of Style was ſo much ſuited to the dignity of inſpiration.

Of authors, who, notwithſtanding many excellencies, have rendered their Style much leſs beautiful by want of Simplicity, I cannot give a more remarkable example than Lord Shafteſbury. This is an author on whom I have made obſervations ſeveral times before, and ſhall now take leave of him, with giving his general character under this head. Conſiderable merit, doubtleſs, he has. His works might be read with profit for the moral philoſophy which they contain, had he not filled them with ſo many oblique and invidious inſinuations againſt the Chriſtian Religion; thrown out, too, with ſo much ſpleen and ſatire, as do no honour to his memory, either as an author or a man. His language has many beauties. It is firm, and ſupported in an uncommon degree; it is rich and muſical. No Engliſh author, as I formerly ſhewed, has attended ſo to the regular conſtruction of his ſentences, both with reſpect to propriety, and with reſpect to cadence. All this gives ſo much elegance and pomp to his language, that there is no wonder it ſhould have been ſometimes highly admired. It is greatly hurt, however, by perpetual ſtiffneſs and affectation. This is its capital fault. His lordſhip can expreſs nothing with Simplicity. He ſeems to have conſidered it as vulgar, and beneath the dignity of a man of quality to ſpeak like other men. Hence he is ever in buſkins; full of circumlocutions and artificial elegance.

egance. In every ſentence, we ſee the marks of labour and art; nothing of that eaſe, which expreſſes a ſentiment coming naturally and warm from the heart. Of figures and ornament of every kind, he is exceedingly fond; ſometimes happy in them; but his fondneſs for them is too viſible; and having once laid hold of ſome metaphor or alluſion that pleaſed him, he knows not how to part with it. What is moſt wonderful, he was a profeſſed admirer of Simplicity; is always extolling it in the ancients, and cenſuring the moderns for the want of it; though he departs from it himſelf as far as any one modern whatever. Lord Shafteſbury poſſeſſed delicacy and refinement of taſte, to a degree that we may call exceſſive and ſickly; but he had little warmth of paſſion; few ſtrong or vigorous feelings: and the coldneſs of his character led him to that artificial and ſtately manner which appears in his writings. He was fonder of nothing than of wit and raillery; but he is far from being happy in it. He attempts it often, but always awkwardly; he is ſtiff, even in his pleaſantry; and laughs in form, like an author, and not like a man.*

From the account which I have given of Lord Shafteſbury's manner, it may eaſily be imagined, that he would miſlead many who blindly admired him. Nothing is more dangerous to the tribe of imitators, than an author, who, with many impoſing beauties, has alſo ſome very conſiderable blemiſhes. This is fully amplified in Mr. Blackwall of Aberdeen, the author of the Life of Homer, the Letters on Mythology, and the Court of Auguſtus; a writer of conſiderable learning, and of ingenuity alſo; but infected with an extravagant love of an artificial Style, and of that parade of language which diſtinguiſhes the Shafteſburean manner.

Having now ſaid ſo much to recommend Simplicity, or the eaſy and natural manner of writing, and having pointed out the defects of an oppoſite manner; in order to prevent miſtakes on this ſubject, it is neceſſary for me to obſerve, that it is very poſ-

ſible

* It may perhaps be not unworthy of being mentioned, that the firſt edition of his Enquiry into Virtue was publiſhed, ſurreptitiouſly, I believe, in a ſeparate form, in the year 1699; and is ſometimes to be met with; by comparing which, with the corrected edition of the ſame treatiſe, as it now ſtands among his works, we ſee one of the moſt curious and uſeful examples that I know, of what is called *Limæ labor*; the art of poliſhing Language, breaking long ſentences, and working up an imperfect draught into a highly finiſhed performance.

ſible for an author to write ſimply, and yet not beautifully. One may be free from affectation and not have merit. The beautiful Simplicity ſuppoſes an author to poſſeſs real genius; to write with ſolidity, purity, and livelineſs of imagination. In this caſe, the ſimplicity or unaffectedneſs of his manner, is the crowning ornament; it heightens every other beauty; it is the dreſs of nature, without which, all beauties are imperfect. But if mere unaffectedneſs were ſufficient to conſtitute the beauty of Style, weak, trifling, and dull writers may often lay claim to this beauty. And, accordingly, we frequently meet with pretended critics, who extol the dulleſt writers on account of what they call the "Chaſte Simplicity of their "manner;" which, in truth, is no other than the abſence of every other ornament, through the mere want of genius and imagination. We muſt diſtinguiſh, therefore, between that Simplicity which accompanies true genius, and which is perfectly compatible with every proper ornament of Style, and that which is no other than a careleſs and ſlovenly manner. Indeed, the diſtinction is eaſily made from the effect produced. The one never fails to intereſt the reader; the other is inſipid and tireſome.

I proceed to mention one other manner or character of Style, different from any that I have yet ſpoken of; which may be diſtinguiſhed by the name of the Vehement. This always implies ſtrength; and is not, by any means, inconſiſtent with Simplicity; but in its predominant character is diſtinguiſhable from either the ſtrong or the ſimple manner. It has a peculiar ardour; it is a glowing Style; the language of a man, whoſe imagination and paſſions are heated, and ſtrongly affected by what he writes; who is therefore negligent of leſſer graces, but pours himſelf forth with the rapidity and fulneſs of a torrent. It belongs to the higher kinds of oratory; and indeed is rather expected from a man who is ſpeaking, than from a man who is writing in his cloſet. The orations of Demoſthenes furniſh the full and perfect example of this ſpecies of Style.

Among Engliſh writers, the one who has moſt of this character, though mixed, indeed, with ſeveral defects, is Lord Bolingbroke. Bolingbroke was formed by nature to be a factious leader; the demagogue of a popular aſſembly.

Accordingly, the Style that runs through all his political writings, is that of one declaiming with heat, rather than writing with deliberation. He abounds in rhetorical figures; and pours himself forth with great impetuosity. He is copious to a fault; places the same thought before us in many different views; but generally with life and ardour. He is bold, rather than correct; a torrent that flows strong, but often muddy. His sentences are varied as to length and shortness; inclining, however, most to long periods, sometimes including parentheses, and frequently crowding and heaping a multitude of things upon one another, as naturally happens in the warmth of speaking. In the choice of his words, there is great felicity and precision. In exact construction of sentences, he is much inferior to Lord Shaftesbury; but greatly superior to him in life and ease. Upon the whole, his merit as a writer, would have been very considerable, if his matter had equalled his Style. But whilst we find many things to commend in the latter, in the former, as I before remarked, we can hardly find any thing to commend. In his reasonings, for most part, he is flimsy and false; in his political writings, factious; in what he calls his philosophical ones, irreligious and sophistical in the highest degree.

I shall insist no longer on the different manners of writers, or the General Characters of Style. Some other, besides those which I have mentioned, might be pointed out; but I am sensible, that it is very difficult to separate such general considerations of the Style of authors from their peculiar turn of sentiment, which it is not my business, at present, to criticise. Conceited writers, for instance, discover their spirit so much in their composition, that it imprints on their Style a character of pertness; though I confess, it is difficult to say, whether this can be classed among the attributes of Style, or rather is to be ascribed entirely to the thought. In whatever class we rank it, all appearances of it ought to be avoided with care, as a most disgusting blemish in writing. Under those general heads, which I have considered, I have taken an opportunity of giving the character of many of the eminent classics in the English Language.

From what I have said on this subject, it may be inferred, that to determine among all those different manners of writing, what

what is preciſely the beſt, is neither eaſy, nor neceſſary. Style is a field that admits of great latitude. Its qualities in different authors may be very different; and yet in them all beautiful. Room muſt be left here for genius; for that particular determination which every one receives from nature to one manner of expreſſion more than another. Some general qualities, indeed, there are of ſuch importance, as ſhould always, in every kind of compoſition, be kept in view; and ſome defects we ſhould always ſtudy to avoid. An oſtentatious, a feeble, a harſh, or an obſcure Style, for inſtance, are always faults; and Perſpicuity, Strength, Neatneſs, and Simplicity, are beauties to be always aimed at. But as to the mixture of all, or the degree of predominancy of any one of theſe good qualities, for forming our peculiar diſtinguiſhing manner, no preciſe rules can be given; nor will I venture to point out any one model as abſolutely perfect.

It will be more to the purpoſe, that I conclude theſe diſſertations upon Style, with a few directions concerning the proper method of attaining a good Style in general; leaving the particular character of that Style to be either formed by the ſubject on which we write, or prompted by the bent of genius.

The firſt direction which I give for this purpoſe is, to ſtudy clear ideas on the ſubject concerning which we are to write or ſpeak. This is a direction which may at firſt appear to have ſmall relation to Style. Its relation to it, however, is extremely cloſe. The foundation of all good Style, is good ſenſe accompanied with a lively imagination. The Style and thoughts of a writer are ſo intimately connected, that, as I have ſeveral times hinted, it is frequently hard to diſtinguiſh them. Wherever the impreſſions of things upon our minds are faint and indiſtinct, or perplexed and confuſed, our Style in treating of ſuch things will infallibly be ſo too. Whereas, what we conceive clearly and feel ſtrongly, we will naturally expreſs with clearneſs and with ſtrength. This, then, we may be aſſured, is a capital rule as to Style, to think cloſely of the ſubject, till we have attained a full and diſtinct view of the matter which we are to clothe in words, till we become warm and intereſted in it; then, and not till then, ſhall we find expreſſion begin to flow. Generally ſpeaking, the beſt and moſt proper expreſſions, are thoſe which

memory, in the beſt way we can; and having done ſo, next to open the book, and compare what we have written, with the Style of the author. Such an exerciſe will, by compariſon, ſhew us where the defects of our Style lie; will lead us to the proper attentions for rectifying them; and, among the different ways in which the ſame thought may be expreſſed, will make us perceive that which is the moſt beautiful. But,

In the fourth place, I muſt caution, at the ſame time, againſt a ſervile imitation of any one author whatever. This is always dangerous. It hampers genius; it is likely to produce a ſtiff manner; and thoſe who are given to cloſe imitation, generally imitate an author's faults as well as his beauties. No man will ever become a good writer, or ſpeaker, who has not ſome degree of confidence to follow his own genius. We ought to beware, in particular, of adopting any author's noted phraſes, or tranſcribing paſſages from him. Such a habit will prove fatal to all genuine compoſition. Infinitely better it is to have ſomething that is our own, though of moderate beauty, than to affect to ſhine in borrowed ornaments, which will, at laſt, betray the utter poverty of our genius. On theſe heads of compoſing, correcting, reading, and imitating, I adviſe every ſtudent of oratory to conſult what Quintilian has delivered in the Xth book of his Inſtitutions, where he will find a variety of excellent obſervations and directions, that well deſerve attention.

In the fifth place, it is an obvious, but material rule, with reſpect to Style, that we always ſtudy to adapt it to the ſubject, and alſo to the capacity of our hearers, if we are to ſpeak in public. Nothing merits the name of eloquent or beautiful, which is not ſuited to the occaſion, and to the perſons to whom it is addreſſed. It is to the laſt degree awkward and abſurd, to attempt a poetical florid Style, on occaſions when it ſhould be our buſineſs only to argue and reaſon; or to ſpeak with elaborate pomp of expreſſion, before perſons who comprehend nothing of it, and who can only ſtare at our unſeaſonable magnificence. Theſe are defects not ſo much in point of Style, as, what is much worſe, in point of common ſenſe. When we begin to write or ſpeak, we ought previouſly to fix in our minds a clear conception of the end to be aimed at; to keep this ſteadily in our view, and to ſuit our Style to it. If we do

not

not ſacrifice to this great object, every ill-timed ornament that may occur to our fancy, we are unpardonable; and though children and fools may admire, men of ſenſe will laugh at us and our Style.

In the laſt place, I cannot conclude the ſubject without this admonition, that, in any caſe, and on any occaſion, attention to Style muſt not engroſs us ſo much, as to detract from a higher degree of attention to the thoughts; "Curam verborum," ſays the great Roman critic, "rerum volo eſſe ſolicitudinem."* A direction the more neceſſary, as the preſent taſte of the age in writing, ſeems to lean more to Style than to thought. It is much eaſier to dreſs up trivial and common ſentiments with ſome beauty of expreſſion, than to afford a fund of vigorous, ingenious, and uſeful thoughts. The latter, requires true genius; the former, may be attained by induſtry, with the help of very ſuperficial parts. Hence, we find ſo many writers frivolouſly rich in Style, but wretchedly poor in ſentiment. The public ear is now ſo much accuſtomed to a correct and ornamented Style, that no writer can, with ſafety, neglect the ſtudy of it. But he is a contemptible one who does not look to ſomething beyond it; who does not lay the chief ſtreſs upon his matter, and employ ſuch ornaments of Style to recommend it, as are manly, not foppiſh: "Majore animo," ſays the writer whom I have ſo often quoted, "aggredienda eſt eloquentia; "quæ ſi toto corpore valet, ungues polire et capillum com- "nere, non exiſtimabit ad curam ſuam pertinere. Ornatus "virilis et fortis, et ſanctus ſit; nec effeminatam levitatem, et "fuco ementitum colorem amet; ſanguine et viribus niteat."†

* "To your expreſſion be attentive: but about your matter be ſolicitous."

† "A higher ſpirit ought to animate thoſe who ſtudy eloquence. They "ought to conſult the health and ſoundneſs of the whole body, rather than "bend their attention to ſuch trifling objects as paring the nails, and dreſſing "the hair. Let ornament be manly and chaſte, without effeminate gaiety, "or artificial colouring; let it ſhine with the glow of health and ſtrength."

LECTURE

LECTURE XX.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE OF MR. ADDISON, IN No. 411 OF THE SPECTATOR.

I HAVE inſiſted fully on the ſubject of Language and Style, both becauſe it is, in itſelf, of great importance, and becauſe it is more capable of being aſcertained by preciſe rule, than ſeveral other parts of compoſition. A critical analyſis of the Style of ſome good author will tend further to illuſtrate the ſubject; as it will ſuggeſt obſervations which I have not had occaſion to make, and will ſhow, in the moſt practical light, the uſe of thoſe which I have made.

Mr. Addiſon is the author whom I have choſen for this purpoſe. The Spectator, of which his papers are the chief ornament, is a book which is in the hands of every one, and which cannot be praiſed too highly. The good ſenſe, and good writing, the uſeful morality, and the admirable vein of humour which abound in it, render it one of thoſe ſtandard books which have done the greateſt honour to the Engliſh nation. I have formerly given the general character of Mr. Addiſon's Style and manner, as natural and unaffected, eaſy and polite, and full of thoſe graces which a flowery imagination diffuſes over writing. At the ſame time, though one of the moſt beautiful writers in the Language, he is not the moſt correct; a circumſtance which renders his compoſition the more proper to be the ſubject of our preſent criticiſm. The free and flowing manner of this amiable writer ſometimes led him into inaccuracies, which the more ſtudied circumſpection and care of far inferior writers have taught them to avoid. Remarking his beauties, therefore, which I ſhall have frequent occaſion to do as I proceed, I muſt alſo point out his negligence and defects. Without a free, impartial diſcuſſion of both the faults and

beauties

beauties which occur in his compoſition, it is evident, this piece of criticiſm would be of no ſervice: and, from the freedom which I uſe in criticiſing Mr. Addiſon's Style, none can imagine, that I mean to depreciate his writings, after having repeatedly declared the high opinion which I entertain of them. The beauties of this author are ſo many, and the general character of his Style is ſo elegant and eſtimable, that the minute imperfections I ſhall have occaſion to point out, are but like thoſe ſpots in the ſun which may be diſcovered by the aſſiſtance of art, but which have no effect in obſcuring its luſtre. It is, indeed, my judgment, that what Quintilian applies to Cicero, "Ille ſe profeciſſe ſciat, cui Cicero valde placebit," may, with juſtice, be applied to Mr. Addiſon; that to be highly pleaſed with his manner of writing, is the criterion of one's having acquired a good taſte in Engliſh Style. The paper on which we are now to enter, is No. 411, the firſt of his celebrated Eſſays on the Pleaſures of the Imagination, in the Sixth Volume of the Spectator. It begins thus:

"Our ſight is the moſt perfect, and moſt delightful of all "our ſenſes."

This is an excellent introductory ſentence. It is clear, preciſe, and ſimple. The author lays down, in a few plain words, the propoſition which he is going to illuſtrate throughout the reſt of the paragraph. In this manner, we ſhould always ſet out. A firſt ſentence ſhould ſeldom be a long, and never an intricate one.

He might have ſaid, *Our ſight is the moſt perfect, and the moſt delightful.* But he has judged better in omitting to repeat the article, *the.* For the repetition of it is proper, chiefly when we intend to point out the objects, of which we ſpeak, as diſtinguiſhed from, or contraſted with, each other; and when we want that the reader's attention ſhould reſt on that diſtinction. For inſtance; had Mr. Addiſon intended to ſay, That our ſight is at once the moſt *delightful*, and the moſt *uſeful*, of all our ſenſes, the article might then have been repeated with propriety, as a clear and ſtrong diſtinction would have been conveyed. But as between *perfect* and *delightful*, there is leſs contraſt, there was no occaſion for ſuch repetition. It would have

had no other effect, but to add a word unneceſſarily to the ſentence. He proceeds:

"It fills the mind with the largeſt variety of ideas, converſes "with its objects at the greateſt diſtance, and continues the "longeſt in action, without being tired or ſatiated with its "proper enjoyments."

This ſentence deſerves attention, as remarkably harmonious, and well conſtructed. It poſſeſſes, indeed, almoſt all the properties of a perfect ſentence. It is entirely perſpicuous. It is loaded with no ſuperfluous or unneceſſary words. For, *tired or ſatiated*, towards the end of the ſentence, are not uſed for ſynonimous terms. They convey diſtinct ideas, and refer to different members of the period; that this ſenſe *continues the longeſt in action, without being tired*, that is, without being fatigued with its action; and alſo, without being *ſatiated with its proper enjoyments*. That quality of a good ſentence, which I termed its unity, is here perfectly preſerved. It is *our ſight* of which he ſpeaks. This is the object carried through the ſentence, and preſented to us, in every member of it, by thoſe verbs, *fills, converſes, continues*, to each of which it is clearly the nominative. Thoſe capital words are diſpoſed of in the moſt proper places; and that uniformity is maintained in the conſtruction of the ſentence, which ſuits the unity of the object.

Obſerve, too, the muſic of the period; conſiſting of three members, each of which, agreeably to a rule I formerly mentioned, grows, and riſes above the other in ſound, till the ſentence is conducted, at laſt, to one of the moſt melodious cloſes which our Language admits; *without being tired or ſatiated with its proper enjoyments*. *Enjoyments*, is a word of length and dignity, exceedingly proper for a cloſe which is deſigned to be a muſical one. The harmony is the more happy, as this diſpoſition of the members of the period which ſuits the ſound ſo well, is no leſs juſt and proper with reſpect to the ſenſe. It follows the order of nature. Firſt, we have the variety of objects mentioned, which ſight furniſhes to the mind; next, we have the action of ſight on thoſe objects; and laſtly, we have the time and continuance of its action. No order could be more natural or happy.

This

This ſentence has ſtill another beauty. It is figurative, without being too much ſo for the ſubject. A metaphor runs through it. The ſenſe of ſight is, in ſome degree, perſonified. We are told of its *converſing* with its objects; and of its not being *tired* or *ſatiated* with its *enjoyments*; all which expreſſions are plain alluſions to the actions and feelings of men. This is that ſlight ſort of perſonification, which, without any appearance of boldneſs, and without elevating the fancy much above its ordinary ſtate, renders diſcourſe pictureſque, and leads us to conceive the author's meaning more diſtinctly, by clothing abſtract ideas, in ſome degree, with ſenſible colours. Mr. Addiſon abounds with this beauty of Style beyond moſt authors; and the ſentence which we have been conſidering, is very expreſſive of his manner of writing. There is no blemiſh in it whatever, unleſs that a ſtrict critic might perhaps object, that the epithet *large*, which he applies to *variety*—*the largeſt variety of ideas*, is an epithet more commonly applied to extent than to number. It is plain, that he here employed it to avoid the repetition of the word *great*, which occurs immediately afterwards.

"The ſenſe of feeling can, indeed, give us a notion of ex-
"tenſion, ſhape, and all other ideas that enter at the eye, ex-
"cept colours; but, at the ſame time, it is very much ſtrait-
"ened and confined, in its operations, to the number, bulk,
"and diſtance of its particular objects."

This ſentence is by no means ſo happy as the former. It is, indeed, neither clear nor elegant. *Extenſion* and *ſhape* can, with no propriety, be called *ideas*; they are properties of matter. Neither is it accurate, even according to Mr. Locke's philoſophy, (with which our Author ſeems here to have puzzled himſelf) to ſpeak of any ſenſe *giving us a notion of ideas*; our ſenſes give us the ideas themſelves. The meaning would have been much more clear, if the Author had expreſſed himſelf thus: "The ſenſe of feeling can, indeed, give us the idea of "extenſion, figure, and all the other properties of matter which "are perceived by the eye, except colours."

The latter part of the ſentence is ſtill more embarraſſed. For what meaning can we make of ſenſe of feeling, being *confined*,

fined, in its operations, to the number, bulk, and diſtance, of its particular objects? Surely, every ſenſe is confined, as much as the ſenſe of feeling, to the number, bulk, and diſtance of its own objects. Sight and feeling are, in this reſpect, perfectly on a level; neither of them can extend beyond their own objects. The turn of expreſſion is ſo inaccurate here, that one would be apt to ſuſpect two words to have been omitted in the printing, which were originally in Mr. Addiſon's manuſcript; becauſe the inſertion would render the ſenſe much more intelligible and clear. Theſe two words are, *with regard*:—*it is very much ſtraitened, and confined, in its operations, with regard to the number, bulk, and diſtance of its particular objects.* The meaning then would be, that feeling is more limited than ſight *in this reſpect*; that it is confined to a narrower circle, to a ſmaller number of objects.

The epithet *particular*, applied to *objects*, in the concluſion of the ſentence, is redundant, and conveys no meaning whatever. Mr. Addiſon ſeems to have uſed it in place of *peculiar*, as indeed he does often in other paſſages of his writings. But *particular* and *peculiar*, though they are too often confounded, are words of different import from each other. *Particular* ſtands oppoſed to *general*; *peculiar* ſtands oppoſed to what is poſſeſſed in *common with others*. *Particular*, expreſſes what in the logical Style is called *Species*; *peculiar*, what is called *differentia*. *Its peculiar objects* would have ſignified in this place, the objects of the ſenſe of feeling, as diſtinguiſhed from the objects of any other ſenſe; and would have had more meaning than *its particular objects*. Though, in truth, neither the one nor the other epithet was requiſite. It was ſufficient to have ſaid ſimply, *its objects*.

"Our ſight ſeems deſigned to ſupply all theſe defects, and "may be conſidered as a more delicate and diffuſive kind of "touch, that ſpreads itſelf over an infinite multitude of bodies, "comprehends the largeſt figures, and brings into our reach "ſome of the moſt remote parts of the univerſe."

Here again the author's Style returns upon us in all its beauty. This is a ſentence diſtinct, graceful, well arranged, and highly muſical. In the latter part of it, it is conſtructed with three members, which are formed much in the ſame manner

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with thoſe of the ſecond ſentence, on which I beſtowed ſo much praiſe. The conſtruction is ſo ſimilar that if it had followed immediately after it, we ſhould have been ſenſible of a faulty monotony. But the interpoſition of another ſentence between them, prevents this effect.

"It is this ſenſe which furniſhes the imagination with its "ideas; ſo that by the Pleaſures of the Imagination or Fancy, "(which I ſhall uſe promiſcuouſly) I here mean ſuch as ariſe "from viſible objects, either when we have them actually in "our view; or when we call up their ideas into our minds "by paintings, ſtatues, deſcriptions, or any the like occaſion."

In place of, *It is this ſenſe which furniſhes*, the author might have ſaid more ſhortly, *This ſenſe furniſhes*. But the mode of expreſſion which he has uſed, is here more proper. This ſort of full and ample aſſertion, *it is this which*, is fit to be uſed when a propoſition of importance is laid down, to which we ſeek to call the reader's attention. It is like pointing with the hand at the object of which we ſpeak. The parentheſis in the middle of the ſentence, *which I ſhall uſe promiſcuouſly*, is not clear. He ought to have ſaid, *terms which I ſhall uſe promiſcuouſly*; as the verb *uſe* relates not to the Pleaſures of the Imagination, but to the terms of Fancy and Imagination, which he was to employ as ſynonimous. *Any the like occaſion.* To call a painting or a ſtatue *an occaſion* is not a happy expreſſion, nor is it very proper to ſpeak of *calling up ideas by occaſions*. The common phraſe, *any ſuch means*, would have been more natural.

"We cannot indeed have a ſingle image in the fancy, that "did not make its firſt entrance through the ſight; but we "have the power of retaining, altering, and compounding "thoſe images which we have once received, into all the varie-"ties of picture and viſion that are moſt agreeable to the imag-"ination; for by this faculty, a man in a dungeon is capable of "entertaining himſelf with ſcenes and landſcapes more beauti-"ful than any that can be found in the whole compaſs of "nature."

It may be of uſe to remark, that in one member of this ſentence there is an inaccuracy in ſyntax. It is very proper to ſay, *altering and compounding thoſe images which we have once received,*

into

into all the varieties of picture and vision. But we can with no propriety say, *retaining them into all the varieties;* and yet, according to the manner in which the words are ranged, this conſtruction is unavoidable. For *retaining, altering,* and *compounding,* are participles, each of which equally refers to, and governs the ſubſequent noun, *thoſe images;* and that noun again is neceſſarily connected with the following prepoſition, *into.* This inſtance ſhows the importance of carefully attending to the rules of grammar and ſyntax; when ſo pure a writer as Mr. Addiſon could, through inadvertence, be guilty of ſuch an error. The conſtruction might eaſily have been rectified, by disjoining the participle *retaining* from the other two participles in this way: "We have the power of retaining thoſe "images which we have once received; and of altering and "compounding them into all the varieties of picture and viſ-"ion;" or better perhaps thus: "We have the power of re-"taining, altering, and compounding thoſe images which we "have once received; and of forming them into all the varieties "of picture and viſion." The latter part of the ſentence is clear and elegant.

"There are few words in the Engliſh Language which are "employed in a more looſe and uncircumſcribed ſenſe than "thoſe of the Fancy and the Imagination."

There are few words—which are employed. It had been better, if our author here had ſaid more ſimply, *Few words in the Engliſh Language are employed.* Mr. Addiſon, whoſe Style is of the free and full, rather than the nervous kind, deals, on all occaſions, in this extended ſort of phraſeology. But it is proper only when ſome aſſertion of conſequence is advanced, and which can bear an emphaſis; ſuch as that in the firſt ſentence of the former paragraph. On other occaſions, theſe little words, *it is,* and *there are,* ought to be avoided as redundant and enfeebling—*thoſe of the Fancy and the Imagination.* The article ought to have been omitted here. As he does not mean the powers of *the Fancy and the Imagination,* but the words only, the article certainly had no proper place; neither, indeed, was there any occaſion for the other two words, *thoſe of.* Better, if the ſentence had run thus: "Few words in the Engliſh Language

"Language are employed in a more looſe and uncircumſcribed "ſenſe, than Fancy and Imagination."

"I therefore thought it neceſſary to fix and determine the "notion of thoſe two words, as I intend to make uſe of them "in the thread of my following ſpeculations, that the read-"er may conceive rightly what is the ſubject which I proceed "upon."

Though *fix* and *determine* may appear ſynonymous words, yet a difference between them may be remarked, and they may be viewed, as applied here, with peculiar delicacy. The author had juſt ſaid, that the words of which he is ſpeaking were *looſe* and *uncircumſcribed*. *Fix* relates to the firſt of theſe, *determine* to the laſt. We *fix* what is *looſe*; that is, we confine the word to its proper place, that it may not fluctuate in our imagination, and paſs from one idea to another; and we *determine* what is *uncircumſcribed*, that is, we aſcertain its *termini* or limits, we draw the circle round it, that we may ſee its boundaries. For we cannot conceive the meaning of a word, or indeed of any other thing clearly, till we ſee its limits, and know how far it extends. Theſe two words, therefore, have grace and beauty as they are here applied; though a writer, more frugal of words than Mr. Addiſon, would have preferred the ſingle word *aſcertain*, which conveys, without any metaphor, the import of them both.

The *notion of theſe words* is ſomewhat of a harſh phraſe, at leaſt not ſo commonly uſed, as the *meaning of theſe words—as I intend to make uſe of them in the thread of my ſpeculations*; this is plainly faulty. A ſort of metaphor is improperly mixed with words in the literal ſenſe. He might very well have ſaid, *as I intend to make uſe of them in my following ſpeculations*. This was plain language; but if he choſe to borrow an alluſion from *thread*, that alluſion ought to have been ſupported; for there is no conſiſtency in *making uſe of them in the thread of ſpeculations*; and, indeed, in expreſſing any thing ſo ſimple and familiar as this is, plain language is always to be preferred to metaphorical —*the ſubject which I proceed upon*, is an ungraceful cloſe of a ſentence; better, *the ſubject upon which I proceed*.

"I muſt

"I muſt therefore deſire him to remember, that, by the Pleaſ-
"ures of the Imagination, I mean only ſuch pleaſures as ariſe
"originally from ſight, and that I divide theſe pleaſures into
"two kinds."

As the laſt ſentence began with, *I therefore thought it neceſſary to fix*, it is careleſs to begin this ſentence in a manner ſo very ſimilar, *I muſt therefore deſire him to remember*; eſpecially, as the ſmall variation of uſing, *on this account*, or, *for this reaſon*, in place of *therefore*, would have amended the Style. When he ſays, *I mean only ſuch pleaſures*, it may be remarked, that the adverb *only* is not in its proper place. It is not intended here to qualify the verb *mean*, but *ſuch pleaſures*; and therefore ſhould have been placed in as cloſe a connexion as poſſible with the word which it limits or qualifies. The Style becomes more clear and neat, when the words are arranged thus; "by the "Pleaſures of the Imagination, I mean ſuch pleaſures only as "ariſe from ſight."

"My deſign being, firſt of all, to diſcourſe of thoſe primary
"Pleaſures of the Imagination, which entirely proceed from ſuch
"objects as are before our eyes; and, in the next place, to
"ſpeak of thoſe ſecondary Pleaſures of the Imagination, which
"flow from the ideas of viſible objects, when the objects are
"not actually before the eye, but are called up into our mem-
"ories or formed into agreeable viſions of things, that are
"either abſent or fictitious."

It is a great rule in laying down the diviſion of a ſubject, to ſtudy neatneſs and brevity as much as poſſible. The diviſions are then more diſtinctly apprehended, and more eaſily remembered. This ſentence is not perfectly happy in that reſpect. It is ſomewhat clogged by a tedious phraſeology. *My deſign being, firſt of all, to diſcourſe—in the next place to ſpeak of—ſuch objects as are before our eyes—things that are either abſent or fictitious.* Several words might have been ſpared here; and the Style made more neat and compact.

"The Pleaſures of the Imagination, taken in their full extent,
"are not ſo groſs as thoſe of ſenſe, nor ſo refined as thoſe of
"the underſtanding."

This ſentence is diſtinct and elegant.

"The

"The laſt are indeed more preferable, becauſe they are found-"ed on ſome new knowledge or improvement in the mind of "man: Yet it muſt be confeſſed, that thoſe of the Imagination "are as great and as tranſporting as the other."

In the beginning of this ſentence, the phraſe, *more preferable*, is ſuch a plain inaccuracy, that one wonders how Mr. Addiſon ſhould have fallen into it; ſeeing *preferable* of itſelf expreſſes the comparative degree, and is the ſame with more eligible, or more excellent.

I muſt obſerve farther, that the propoſition contained in the laſt member of this ſentence, is neither clear nor neatly expreſſed—*it muſt be confeſſed, that thoſe of the Imagination are as great, and as tranſporting as the other.* In the former ſentence, he had compared three things together; the Pleaſures of the Imagination, thoſe of ſenſe, and thoſe of the underſtanding. In the beginning of this ſentence, he had called the pleaſures of the underſtanding *the laſt*; and he ends the ſentence, with obſerving, that thoſe of the Imagination are as great and tranſporting *as the other*. Now, beſides that *the other* makes not a proper contraſt with *the laſt*, he leaves it ambiguous, whether, by *the other*, he meant the pleaſures of the underſtanding, or the pleaſures of ſenſe; for it may refer to either, by the conſtruction; though, undoubtedly, he intended that it ſhould refer to the pleaſures of the underſtanding only. The propoſition reduced to perſpicuous language, runs thus: "Yet it muſt be confeſſed, that the Pleaſ-"ures of the Imagination, when compared with thoſe of the "underſtanding, are no leſs great and tranſporting."

"A beautiful proſpect delights the ſoul as much as a dem-"onſtration; and a deſcription in Homer has charmed more "readers than a chapter in Ariſtotle."

This is a good illuſtration of what he had been aſſerting, and is expreſſed with that happy and elegant turn, for which our author is very remarkable.

"Beſides, the Pleaſures of the Imagination have this advan-"tage above thoſe of the underſtanding, that they are more ob-"vious, and more eaſy to be acquired."

This alſo is an unexceptionable ſentence.

"It is but opening the eye, and the ſcene enters."

This ſentence is lively and pictureſque. By the gaiety and briſkneſs which it gives the Style, it ſhows the advantage of intermixing ſuch a ſhort ſentence as this amidſt a run of longer ones, which never fails to have a happy effect. I muſt remark, however, a ſmall inaccuracy. A *ſcene* cannot be ſaid to *enter*; an *actor* enters; but a ſcene *appears*, or *preſents itſelf*.

"The colours paint themſelves on the fancy, with very little "attention of thought or application of mind in the beholder."

This is ſtill beautiful illuſtration; carried on with that agreeable flowerineſs of fancy and Style, which is ſo well ſuited to thoſe Pleaſures of the Imagination, of which the author is treating.

"We are ſtruck, we know not how, with the ſymmetry of "any thing we ſee, and immediately aſſent to the beauty of an "object, without inquiring into the particular cauſes and oc-"caſions of it."

There is a falling off here from the elegance of the former ſentences. We *aſſent* to the truth of a propoſition; but cannot ſo well be ſaid *to aſſent to the beauty of an object*. *Acknowledge* would have expreſſed the ſenſe with more propriety. The cloſe of the ſentence too is heavy and ungraceful—*the particular cauſes and occaſions of it*; both *particular*, and *occaſions*, are words quite ſuperfluous; and the pronoun *it*, is in ſome meaſure ambiguous, whether it refers to beauty or to object. It would have been ſome amendment to the Style to have run thus: "We immediately acknowledge the beauty of an object, with-"out inquiring into the cauſe of that beauty."

"A man of a polite Imagination is let into a great many "pleaſures, that the vulgar are not capable of receiving."

Polite is a term more commonly applied to manners or behaviour, than to the mind or Imagination. There is nothing farther to be obſerved on this ſentence, unleſs the uſe of *that* for a relative pronoun, inſtead of *which*; an uſage which is too frequent with Mr. Addiſon. *Which* is a much more definite word than *that*, being never employed in any other way than as a relative; whereas *that* is a word of many ſenſes; ſometimes a demonſtrative pronoun, often a conjunction. In ſome caſes we are indeed obliged to uſe *that* for a relative, in order to avoid

the

the ungraceful repetition of *which* in the ſame ſentence. But when we are laid under no neceſſity of this kind, *which* is always the preferable word, and certainly was ſo in this ſentence. *Pleaſures which the vulgar are not capable of receiving*, is much better than *pleaſures that the vulgar*, &c.

"He can converſe with a picture, and find an agreeable com-
"panion in a ſtatue. He meets with a ſecret refreſhment in a
"deſcription; and often feels a greater ſatisfaction in the proſ-
"pect of fields and meadows, than another does in the poſſeſ-
"ſion. It gives him, indeed, a kind of property in every thing
"he ſees; and makes the moſt rude uncultivated parts of na-
"ture adminiſter to his pleaſures: ſo that he looks upon the
"world, as it were, in another light, and diſcovers in it a multi-
"tude of charms that conceal themſelves from the generality of
"mankind."

All this is very beautiful. The illuſtration is happy; and the Style runs with the greateſt eaſe and harmony. We ſee no labour, no ſtiffneſs, or affectation; but an author writing from the native flow of a gay and pleaſing Imagination. This predominant character of Mr. Addiſon's manner, far more than compenſates all thoſe little negligences which we are now remarking. Two of theſe occur in this paragraph. The firſt, in the ſentence, which begins with, *It gives him indeed a kind of property*: To this *it*, there is no proper antecedent in the whole paragraph. In order to gather the meaning, we muſt look back as far as to the third ſentence before, the firſt of the paragraph, which begins with, *A man of a polite Imagination*. This phraſe, *polite Imagination*, is the only antecedent to which this *it* can refer; and even that is an improper antecedent, as it ſtands in the genitive caſe, as the qualification only of *a man*.

The other inſtance of negligence, is towards the end of the paragraph, *So that he looks upon the world, as it were, in another light*. By *another* light, Mr. Addiſon means, a light different from that in which other men view the world. But though this expreſſion clearly conveyed this meaning to himſelf when writing, it conveys it very indiſtinctly to others; and is an inſtance of that ſort of inaccuracy, into which, in the warmth of compoſition, every writer of a lively Imagination is apt to fall; and which can only be remedied by a cool, ſubſequent review. *As it were*, is upon

on moſt occaſions no more than an ungraceful palliative; and here there was not the leaſt occaſion for it, as he was not about to ſay any thing which required a ſoftening of this kind. To ſay the truth, this laſt ſentence, *ſo that he looks upon the world*, and what follows, had better been wanting altogether. It is no more than an unneceſſary recapitulation of what had gone before; a feeble adjection to the lively picture he had given of the Pleaſures of the Imagination. The paragraph would have ended with more ſpirit at the words immediately preceding; *the uncultivated parts of nature adminiſter to his pleaſures.*

"There are, indeed, but very few who know how to be idle "and innocent, or have a reliſh of any pleaſures that are not "criminal; every diverſion they take, is at the expenſe of ſome "one virtue or another, and their very firſt ſtep out of buſineſs "is into vice or folly."

Nothing can be more elegant, or more finely turned, than this ſentence. It is neat, clear, and muſical. We could hardly alter one word, or diſarrange one member, without ſpoiling it. Few ſentences are to be found more finiſhed, or more happy.

"A man ſhould endeavour, therefore, to make the ſphere "of his innocent pleaſures as wide as poſſible, that he may "retire into them with ſafety, and find in them ſuch a ſatis-"faction as a wiſe man would not bluſh to take."

This alſo is a good ſentence, and gives occaſion to no material remark.

"Of this nature are thoſe of the Imagination, which do not "require ſuch a bent of thought as is neceſſary to our more "ſerious employments, nor, at the ſame time, ſuffer the mind "to ſink into that indolence and remiſſneſs, which are apt to "accompany our more ſenſual delights; but, like a gentle ex-"erciſe to the faculties, awaken them from ſloth and idleneſs, "without putting upon them any labour or difficulty."

The beginning of this ſentence is not correct, and affords an inſtance of a period too looſely connected with the preceding one. *Of this nature*, ſays he, *are thoſe of the Imagination.* We might aſk of what nature? For it had not been the ſcope of the preceding ſentence to deſcribe the nature of any ſet of pleaſ-

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ures. He had ſaid, that it was every man's duty to make the ſphere of his innocent pleaſures as wide as poſſible, in order that, within that ſphere, he might find a ſafe retreat, and a laudable ſatisfaction. The tranſition is loofely made, by beginning the next ſentence with ſaying, *Of this nature are thoſe of the Imagination.* It had been better, if, keeping in view the governing object of the preceding ſentence, he had ſaid, "This "advantage we gain," or, "This ſatisfaction we enjoy, by "means of the Pleaſures of Imagination." The reſt of the ſentence is abundantly correct.

"We might here add, that the pleaſures of the fancy are "more conducive to health than thoſe of the underſtand-"ing, which are worked out by dint of thinking, and attend-"ed with too violent a labour of the brain."

On this ſentence, nothing occurs deſerving of remark, except that *worked out by dint of thinking*, is a phraſe which borders too much on vulgar and colloquial language, to be proper for being employed in a poliſhed compoſition.

"Delightful ſcenes, whether in nature, painting, or poetry, "have a kindly influence on the body, as well as the mind, "and not only ſerve to clear and brighten the imagination, "but are able to diſperſe grief and melancholy, and to ſet "the animal ſpirits in pleaſing and agreeable motions. For "this reaſon, Sir Francis Bacon, in his Eſſay upon Health, has "not thought it improper to preſcribe to his reader a poem, or "a proſpect, where he particularly diſſuades him from knotty "and ſubtile diſquiſitions, and adviſes him to purſue ſtudies "that fill the mind with ſplendid and illuſtrious objects, as "hiſtories, fables, and contemplations of nature."

In the latter of theſe two ſentences, a member of the period is altogether out of its place; which gives the whole ſentence a harſh and disjointed caſt, and ſerves to illuſtrate the rules I formerly gave concerning arrangement. The wrong-placed member which I point at, is this; *where he particularly diſſuades him from knotty and ſubtile diſquiſitions*; theſe words ſhould, undoubtedly, have been placed not where they ſtand, but thus: *Sir Francis Bacon, in his Eſſay upon Health, where he particularly diſſuades the reader from knotty and ſubtile ſpeculations, has not thought*

thought it improper to prescribe to him, &c. This arrangement reduces every thing into its proper order.

"I have, in this paper, by way of introduction, settled the "notion of those Pleasures of the Imagination, which are the "subject of my present undertaking, and endeavoured, by sev-"eral considerations, to recommend to my readers the pursuit "of these pleasures: I shall, in my next paper, examine the sev-"eral sources from whence these pleasures are derived."

These two concluding sentences afford examples of the proper collocation of circumstances in a period. I formerly showed, that it is often a matter of difficulty to dispose of them in such a manner, as that they shall not embarrass the principal subject of the sentence. In the sentences before us, several of these incidental circumstances necessarily come in—*By way of introduction—by several considerations—in this paper—in the next paper.* All which are, with great propriety, managed by our author. It will be found, upon trial, that there were no other parts of the sentence, in which they could have been placed to equal advantage. Had he said, for instance, "I have "settled the notion, (rather, *the meaning*) of those Pleas-"ures of the Imagination, which are the subject of my pres-"ent undertaking, by way of introduction, in this paper, "and endeavoured to recommend the pursuit of those pleas-"ures to my readers, by several considerations," we must be sensible, that the sentence, thus clogged with circumstances in the wrong place, would neither have been so neat nor so clear, as it is by the present construction.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXI.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 412 OF THE SPECTATOR.

THE obſervations which have occurred in reviewing that paper of Mr. Addiſon's, which was the ſubject of the laſt Lecture, ſufficiently ſhow, that in the writings of an author, of the moſt happy genius, and diſtinguiſhed talents, inaccuracies may ſometimes be found. Though ſuch inaccuracies may be overbalanced by ſo many beauties, as render Style highly pleaſing and agreeable upon the whole, yet it muſt be deſirable to every writer to avoid, as far as he can, inaccuracy of any kind. As the ſubject therefore is of importance, I have thought it might be uſeful to carry on this criticiſm throughout two or three ſubſequent papers of the Spectator. At the ſame time, I muſt intimate, that the Lectures on theſe papers are ſolely intended for ſuch as are applying themſelves to the ſtudy of Engliſh Style. I pretend not to give inſtruction to thoſe who are already well acquainted with the powers of language. To them my remarks may prove unedifying; to ſome they may ſeem tedious and minute: but to ſuch as have not yet made all the proficiency which they deſire in elegance of Style, ſtrict attention to the compoſition and ſtructure of ſentences cannot fail to prove of conſiderable benefit: and though my remarks on Mr. Addiſon ſhould, in any inſtance, be thought ill-founded, they will, at leaſt, ſerve the purpoſe of leading them into the train of making proper remarks for themſelves.* I proceed,

* If there be readers who think any farther apology requiſite for my adventuring to criticiſe the ſentences of ſo eminent an author as Mr. Addiſon, I muſt take notice, that I was naturally led to it by the circumſtances of that part of the kingdom where theſe Lectures were read; where the ordinary ſpoken language often differs much from what is uſed by good Engliſh authors. Hence it occurred to me, as a proper method of correcting any peculiarities

proceed, therefore, to the examination of the ſubſequent paper, No. 412.

"I ſhall firſt conſider thoſe Pleaſures of the Imagination, "which ariſe from the actual view and ſurvey of outward "objects: and theſe, I think, all proceed from the ſight of what "is great, uncommon, or beautiful."

This ſentence gives occaſion for no material remark. It is ſimple and diſtinct. The two words which he here uſes, *view* and *ſurvey*, are not altogether ſynonimous: as the former may be ſuppoſed to import mere inſpection; the latter more deliberate examination. Yet they lie ſo near to one another in meaning, that, in the preſent caſe, any one of them, perhaps, would have been ſufficient. The epithet *actual*, is introduced, in order to mark more ſtrongly the diſtinction between what our author calls the primary Pleaſures of Imagination, which ariſe from immediate view, and the ſecondary, which ariſe from remembrance or deſcription.

"There may, indeed, be ſomething ſo terrible or offenſive, "that the horror, or loathſomeneſs of an object, may overbear "the pleaſure which reſults from its novelty, greatneſs, or "beauty; but ſtill there will be ſuch a mixture of delight in the "very diſguſt it gives us, as any of theſe three qualifications "are moſt conſpicuous and prevailing."

This ſentence muſt be acknowledged to be an unfortunate one. The ſenſe is obſcure and embarraſſed, and the expreſſion looſe and irregular. The beginning of it is perplexed by the wrong poſition of the words *ſomething* and *object*. The natural arrangement would have been, *There may, indeed, be ſomething in an object ſo terrible or offenſive, that the horror or loathſomeneſs of it may overbear.* Theſe two epithets, *horror* or *loathſomeneſs*, are awkwardly joined together. *Loathſomeneſs* is, indeed, a quality which may be aſcribed to an object; but *horror* is not; it is a feeling excited in the mind. The Language would

culiarities of dialect, to direct ſtudents of eloquence, to analize and examine, with particular attention, the ſtructure of Mr. Addiſon's ſentences. Thoſe papers of the Spectator, which are the ſubject of the following Lectures, were accordingly given out in exerciſe to ſtudents, to be thus examined and analized; and ſeveral of the obſervations which follow, both on the beauties and blemiſhes of this Author, were ſuggeſted, by the obſervations given to me in conſequence of the exerciſe preſcribed.

would have been much more correct, had our Author said, *There may, indeed, be something in an object so terrible or offensive, that the horror or disgust which it excites may overbear.* The first two epithets, *terrible* or *offensive*, would then have expressed the qualities of an object; the latter, *horror* or *disgust*, the corresponding sentiments which these qualities produce in us. *Loathsomeness* was the most unhappy word he could have chosen: for to be *loathsome*, is to be odious, and seems totally to exclude any *mixture of delight*, which he afterwards supposes may be found in the object.

In the latter part of the sentence there are several inaccuracies. When he says, *there will be such a mixture of delight in the very disgust it gives us, as any of these three qualifications are most conspicuous.* The construction is defective, and seems hardly grammatical. He meant assuredly to say, *such a mixture of delight as is proportioned to the degree in which any of these three qualifications are most conspicuous.* We know, that there may be a mixture of pleasant and of disagreeable feelings excited by the same object; yet it appears inaccurate to say, that there is any *delight in the very disgust.* The plural verb, *are*, is improperly joined to *any of these three qualifications*; for as *any* is here used distributively, and means *any one of these three qualifications*, the corresponding verb ought to have been singular. The order in which the two last words are placed, should have been reversed, and made to stand, *prevailing and conspicuous.* They are *conspicuous*, because they *prevail.*

"By greatness, I do not only mean the bulk of any single "object, but the largeness of a whole view, considered as one "entire piece."

In a former Lecture, when treating of the Structure of Sentences, I quoted this sentence as an instance of the careless manner in which adverbs are sometimes interjected in the midst of a period. *Only*, as it is here placed, appears to be a limitation of the following verb, *mean.* The question might be put, What more does he than only mean? as the author, undoubtedly, intended it to refer to the *bulk of a single object*, it would have been placed, with more propriety after these words: *I do not mean the bulk of any single object only, but the largeness of a whole view.* As the following phrase, *considered as one entire*

piece, ſeems to be ſomewhat deficient, both in dignity and propriety, perhaps this adjection might have been altogether omitted, and the ſentence have cloſed with fully as much advantage at the word *view*.

" Such are the proſpects of an open champaign country, a " vaſt uncultivated deſert, of huge heaps of mountains, high " rocks and precipices, or a wide expanſe of waters, where we " are not ſtruck with the novelty, or beauty of the ſight, but " with that rude kind of magnificence which appears in many " of theſe ſtupendous works of nature."

This ſentence, in the main, is beautiful. The objects preſented are all of them noble, ſelected with judgment, arranged with propriety, and accompanied with proper epithets. We muſt, however, obſerve, that the ſentence is too looſely, and not very grammatically, connected with the preceding one. He ſays, *ſuch are the proſpects: ſuch*, ſignifies, of that nature or quality; which neceſſarily preſuppoſes ſome adjective, or word, deſcriptive of a quality going before, to which it refers. But, in the foregoing ſentence, there is no ſuch adjective. He had ſpoken of *greatneſs* in the abſtract only; and, therefore, *ſuch* has no diſtinct antecedent to which we can refer it. The ſentence would have been introduced with more grammatical propriety, by ſaying, *To this claſs belong*, or, *under this head are ranged the proſpects*, &c. The *of*, which is prefixed to *huge heaps of mountains*, is miſplaced, and has, perhaps, been an error in the printing; as, either all the particulars here enumerated ſhould have had this mark of the genitive, or it ſhould have been prefixed to none but the firſt. When, in the cloſe of the ſentence, the Author ſpeaks of that *rude magnificence, which appears in many of theſe ſtupendous works of nature*, he had better have omitted the word *many*, which ſeems to except ſome of them. Whereas, in his general propoſition, he undoubtedly meant to include all the ſtupendous works he had enumerated; and there is no queſtion that, in all of them, a rude magnificence appears.

" Our imagination loves to be filled with an object, or to " graſp at any thing that is too big for its capacity. We are " flung into a pleaſing aſtoniſhment at ſuch unbounded views; " and feel a delightful ſtillneſs and amazement in the ſoul, at " the apprehenſion of them."

The

The language here is elegant, and several of the expressions remarkably happy. There is nothing which requires any animadversion except the close, *at the apprehension of them.* Not only is this a languid enfeebling conclusion of a sentence, otherwise beautiful, but *the apprehension of views*, is a phrase destitute of all propriety, and, indeed, scarcely intelligible. Had this adjection been entirely omitted, and the sentence been allowed to close with *stillness and amazement in the soul*, it would have been a great improvement. Nothing is frequently more hurtful to the grace or vivacity of a period, than superfluous dragging words at the conclusion.

"The mind of man naturally hates every thing that looks "like a restraint upon it, and is apt to fancy itself under a sort "of confinement, when the sight is pent up in a narrow com- "pass, and shortened on every side by the neighbourhood of "walls or mountains. On the contrary, a spacious horizon "is an image of liberty, where the eye has room to range "abroad, to expatiate at large on the immensity of its views, "and to lose itself amidst the variety of objects that offer them- "selves to its observation. Such wide and undetermined pros- "pects are as pleasing to the fancy, as the speculations of eter- "nity, or infinitude, are to the understanding."

Our Author's Style appears, here, in all that native beauty which cannot be too much praised. The numbers flow smoothly, and with a graceful harmony. The words which he has chosen, carry a certain amplitude and fulness, well suited to the nature of the subject; and the members of the periods rise in a gradation accommodated to the rise of the thought. The eye first *ranges abroad*; then *expatiates at large on the immensity of its views*; and, at last, *loses itself amidst the variety of objects that offer themselves to its observation.* The *fancy* is elegantly contrasted with the *understanding*, *prospects* with *speculations*, and *wide and undetermined prospects*, with *speculations of eternity and infinitude.*

"But if there be a beauty or uncommonness joined with this "grandeur, as in a troubled ocean, a heaven adorned with stars "and meteors, or a spacious landscape cut out into rivers, "woods, rocks and meadows, the pleasure still grows upon us, "as it arises from more than a single principle."

The

The article prefixed to *beauty*, in the beginning of this ſentence, might have been omitted, and the Style have run, perhaps, to more advantage thus: *But if beauty, or uncommonneſs, be joined to this grandeur—A landſcape cut out into rivers, woods*, &c. ſeems unſeaſonably to imply an artificial formation, and had better have been expreſſed by, *diverſified with rivers, woods*, &c.

"Every thing that is new or uncommon, raiſes a pleaſure in "the imagination, becauſe it fills the ſoul with an agreeable "ſurpriſe, gratifies its curioſity, and gives it an idea of which "it was not before poſſeſſed. We are, indeed, ſo often con- "verſant with one ſet of objects, and tired out with ſo many "repeated ſhows of the ſame things, that whatever is new or "uncommon contributes a little to vary human life, and to di- "vert our minds, for a while, with the ſtrangeneſs of its ap- "pearance. It ſerves us for a kind of refreſhment, and takes "off from that ſatiety we are apt to complain of in our uſual "and ordinary entertainments."

The Style in theſe ſentences flows in an eaſy and agreeable manner. A ſevere critic might point out ſome expreſſions that would bear being retrenched. But this would alter the genius and character of Mr. Addiſon's Style. We muſt always remember, that good compoſition admits of being carried on under many different forms. Style muſt not be reduced to one preciſe ſtandard. One writer may be as agreeable, by a pleaſing diffuſeneſs, when the ſubject bears, and his genius prompts it, as another by a conciſe and forcible manner. It is fit, however, to obſerve, that in the beginning of thoſe ſentences which we have at preſent before us, the phraſe, *raiſes a pleaſure in the imagination*, is unqueſtionably too flat and feeble, and might eaſily be amended, by ſaying, *affords pleaſure to the imagination*; and towards the end, there are two *of's*, which grate harſhly on the ear, in that phraſe, *takes off from that ſatiety we are apt to complain of*; where the correction is as eaſily made as in the other caſe, by ſubſtituting, *diminiſhes that ſatiety of which we are apt to complain*. Such inſtances ſhow the advantage of frequent reviews of what we have written, in order to give proper correctneſs and poliſh to our language.

"It

" It is this which beſtows charms on a monſter, and makes " even the imperfections of nature pleaſe us. It is this that " recommends variety where the mind is every inſtant called " off to ſomething new, and the attention not ſuffered to dwell " too long, and waſte itſelf, on any particular object. It is " this likewiſe, that improves what is great or beautiful, and " makes it afford the mind a double entertainment."

Still the Style proceeds with perſpicuity, grace and harmony. The full and ample aſſertion, with which each of theſe ſentences is introduced, frequent on many occaſions, with our Author, is here proper and ſeaſonable; as it was his intention to magnify, as much as poſſible, the effects of novelty and variety, and to draw our attention to them. His frequent uſe of *that*, inſtead of *which*, is another peculiarity of his Style; but, on this occaſion in particular, cannot be much commended, as *it is this which*, ſeems, in every view, to be better than, *it is this that*, three times repeated. I muſt, likewiſe, take notice, that the antecedent to, *it is this*, when critically conſidered, is not altogether proper. It refers, as we diſcover by the ſenſe, to *whatever is new or uncommon*. But as it is not good language to ſay, *whatever is new beſtows charms on a monſter*, one cannot avoid thinking that our Author had done better to have begun the firſt of theſe three ſentences, with ſaying, *It is novelty which beſtows charms on a monſter*, &c.

" Groves, fields, and meadows, are at any ſeaſon of the year " pleaſant to look upon; but never ſo much as in the opening " of the ſpring, when they are all new and freſh, with their " firſt gloſs upon them, and not yet too much accuſtomed and " familiar to the eye."

In this expreſſion, *never ſo much as in the opening of the ſpring*, there appears to be a ſmall error in grammar; for when the conſtruction is filled up, it muſt be read, *never ſo much pleaſant*. Had he, to avoid this, ſaid, *never ſo much ſo*, the grammatical error would have been prevented, but the language would have been awkward. Better to have ſaid, *but never ſo agreeable as in the opening of the ſpring*. We readily ſay, the eye is accuſtomed to objects, but to ſay, as our author has done at the cloſe of the ſentence, that objects are *accuſtomed to the eye*, can ſcarcely be allowed in a proſe compoſition.

" For

" For this reaſon, there is nothing that more enlivens a proſ-
" pect than rivers, jetteaus, or falls of water, where the ſcene
" is perpetually ſhifting and entertaining the ſight, every mo-
" ment, with ſomething that is new. We are quickly tired
" with looking at hills and vallies, where every thing continues
" fixed and ſettled in the ſame place and poſture, but find our
" thoughts a little agitated and relieved at the ſight of ſuch ob-
" jects as are ever in motion, and ſliding away from beneath
" the eye of the beholder."

The firſt of theſe ſentences is connected in too looſe a manner with that which immediately preceded it. When he ſays, *For this reaſon, there is nothing that more enlivens, &c.* we are entitled to look for the *reaſon* in what he had juſt before ſaid. But there we find no *reaſon* for what he is now going to aſſert, exeept that groves and meadows are moſt pleaſant in the ſpring. We know that he has been ſpeaking of the pleaſure produced by novelty and variety, and our minds naturally recur to this, as the reaſon here alluded to; but his language does not properly expreſs it. It is, indeed, one of the defects of this amiable writer, that his ſentences are often too negligently connected with one another. His meaning, upon the whole, we gather with eaſe from the tenour of his diſcourſe. Yet this negligence prevents his ſenſe from ſtriking us with that force and evidence, which a more accurate juncture of parts would have produced. Bating this inaccuracy, theſe two ſentences, eſpecially the latter, are remarkably elegant and beautiful. The cloſe, in particular, is uncommonly fine, and carries as much expreſſive harmony as the language can admit. It ſeems to paint, what he is deſcribing, at once to the eye and the ear. *Such objects as are ever in motion, and ſliding away from beneath the eye of the beholder.* Indeed, notwithſtanding thoſe ſmall errors, which the ſtrictneſs of critical examination obliges me to point out, it may be ſafely pronounced, that the two paragraphs which we have now conſidered in this paper, the one concerning greatneſs, and the other concerning novelty, are extremely worthy of Mr. Addiſon, and exhibit a Style, which they who can ſucceſsfully imitate, may eſteem themſelves happy.

" But there is nothing that makes its way more directly to
" the ſoul than beauty, which immediately diffuſes a ſecret ſat-
" isfaction

" isfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives " a finiſhing to any thing that is great or uncommon. The " very firſt diſcovery of it ſtrikes the mind with an inward " joy, and ſpreads a cheerfulneſs and delight through all its " faculties."

Some degree of verboſity may be here diſcovered, and phraſes repeated, which are little more than the echo of one another; ſuch as, *diffuſing ſatisfaction and complacency through the imagination—ſtriking the mind with inward joy—ſpreading cheerfulneſs and delight through all its faculties.* At the ſame time, I readily admit that this full and flowing Style, even though it carry ſome redundancy, is not unſuitable to the gaiety of the ſubject on which the Author is entering, and is more allowable here than it would have been on ſome other occaſions.

" There is not, perhaps, any real beauty or deformity more " in one piece of matter than another; becauſe we might " have been ſo made, that whatever now appears loathſome " to us, might have ſhewn itſelf agreeable; but we find, by " experience, that there are ſeveral modifications of matter, " which the mind, without any previous conſideration, pro- " nounces at firſt ſight beautiful or deformed."

In this ſentence there is nothing remarkable, in any view, to draw our attention. We may obſerve only, that the word *more*, towards the beginning, is not in its proper place, and that the prepoſition *in*, is wanting before *another*. The phraſe ought to have ſtood thus: *Beauty or deformity in one piece of matter, more than in another.*

" Thus we ſee, that every different ſpecies of ſenſible crea- " tures has its different notions of beauty, and that each of " them is moſt affected with the beauties of its own kind. This " is no where more remarkable, than in birds of the ſame " ſhape and proportion, when we often ſee the male determined " in his courtſhip by the ſingle grain or tincture of a feather, " and never diſcovering any charms but in the colour of its " ſpecies."

Neither is there here any particular elegance or felicity of language. *Different ſenſe of beauty* would have been a more proper expreſſion to have been applied to irrational creatures, than as it ſtands, *different notions of beauty*. In the cloſe

of

of the ſecond ſentence, when the Author ſays, *colour of its ſpecies*, he is guilty of a conſiderable inaccuracy in changing the gender, as he had ſaid in the ſame ſentence, that the *male was determined in his courtſhip*.

" There is a ſecond kind of beauty, that we find in the ſeveral products of art and nature, which does not work in the " imagination with that warmth and violence, as the beauty that " appears in our proper ſpecies, but is apt, however, to raiſe in " us a ſecret delight, and a kind of fondneſs for the places or " objects in which we diſcover it."

Still, I am ſorry to ſay, we find little to praiſe. As in his enunciation of the ſubject, when beginning the former paragraph, he appeared to have been treating of beauty in general, in diſtinction from greatneſs or novelty; this *ſecond kind of beauty* of which he here ſpeaks, comes upon us in a ſort of ſurpriſe, and it is only by degrees we learn, that formerly he had no more in view than the beauty which the different ſpecies of ſenſible creatures find in one another. This *ſecond kind of beauty*, he ſays, *we find in the ſeveral products of art and nature*. He undoubtedly means, not in all, but *in ſeveral of the products of art and nature*; and ought ſo to have expreſſed himſelf; and in the place of *products*, to have uſed alſo the more proper word, *productions*. When he adds, that this kind of beauty *does not work in the imagination with that warmth and violence as the beauty that appears in our proper ſpecies*; the language would certainly have been more pure and elegant, if he had ſaid, that it *does not work upon the imagination with ſuch warmth and violence, as the beauty that appears in our own ſpecies*.

" This conſiſts either in the gaiety, or variety of colours, in " the ſymmetry and proportion of parts, in the arrangement " and diſpoſition of bodies, or in a juſt mixture and concur- " rence of all together. Among theſe ſeveral kinds of beauty, " the eye takes moſt delight in colours."

To the language here, I ſee no objection that can be made.

" We no where meet with a more glorious or more pleaſing " ſhow in nature, than what appears in the heavens at the riſing " and ſetting of the ſun, which is wholly made up of thoſe dif- " ferent ſtains of light, that ſhow themſelves in clouds of a dif- " ferent ſituation."

The

The chief ground of criticiſm on this ſentence, is the diſjointed ſituation of the relative *which*. Grammatically, it refers to *the riſing and ſetting of the ſun*. But the Author meant, that it ſhould refer *to the ſhow* which appears in the heavens at that time. It is too common among authors, when they are writing without much care, to make ſuch particles as *this*, and *which*, refer not to any particular antecedent word, but to the tenour of ſome phraſe, or perhaps the ſcope of ſome whole ſentence, which has gone before. This practice ſaves them trouble in marſhalling their words, and arranging a period: but, though it may leave their meaning intelligible, yet it renders that meaning much leſs perſpicuous, determined, and preciſe, than it might otherwiſe have been. The error I have pointed out, might have been avoided by a ſmall alteration in the conſtruction of the ſentence, after ſome ſuch manner as this: *We no where meet with a more glorious and pleaſing ſhow in nature, than what is formed in the heavens at the riſing and ſetting of the ſun, by the different ſtains of light which ſhow themſelves in clouds of different ſituations.* Our Author writes, *in clouds of a different ſituation*, by which he means, clouds that differ in ſituation from each other. But, as this is neither the obvious nor grammatical meaning of his words, it was neceſſary to change the expreſſion, as I have done, into the plural number.

"For this reaſon, we find the poets, who are always addreſſ-
"ing themſelves to the imagination, borrowing more of their
"epithets from colours than from any other topic."

On this ſentence nothing occurs, except a remark ſimilar to what was made before, of looſe connexion with the ſentence which precedes. For, though he begins with ſaying, *For this reaſon*, the foregoing ſentence, which was employed about the *clouds* and *the ſun*, gives no reaſon for the general propoſition he now lays down. The *reaſon* to which he refers, was given two ſentences before, when he obſerved, that the eye takes more delight in colours than in any other beauty; and it was with that ſentence that the preſent one ſhould have ſtood immediately connected.

"As the fancy delights in every thing that is great, ſtrange,
"or beautiful, and is ſtill more pleaſed, the more it finds of

"these perfections in the same object, so it is capable of re-
"ceiving a new satisfaction by the assistance of another sense."

Another sense here, means grammatically, *another sense than fancy*. For there is no other thing in the period to which this expression, *another sense*, can at all be opposed. He had not for some time made mention of any *sense* whatever. He forgot to add, what was undoubtedly in his thoughts, *another sense than that of sight*.

"Thus any continued sound, as the music of birds, or a fall
"of water, awakens every moment the mind of the beholder,
"and makes him more attentive to the several beauties of the
"place which lie before him. Thus, if there arises a fragran-
"cy of smells or perfumes, they heighten the pleasures of the
"imagination, and make even the colours and verdure of the
"landscape appear more agreeable; for the ideas of both senses
"recommend each other, and are pleasanter together, than
"when they enter the mind separately; as the different col-
"ours of a picture, when they are well disposed, set off one
"another, and receive an additional beauty from the advantage
"of their situation."

Whether Mr. Addison's theory here be just or not, may be questioned. A continued sound, such as that of a fall of water, is so far from *awakening, every moment, the mind of the beholder*, that nothing is more likely to lull him asleep. It may, indeed, please the imagination, and heighten the beauties of the scene; but it produces this effect, by a soothing, not by an awakening influence. With regard to the Style, nothing appears exceptionable. The flow, both of language and of ideas, is very agreeable. The author continues, to the end, the same pleasing train of thought, which had run through the rest of the paper; and leaves us agreeably employed in comparing together different degrees of beauty.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXII.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 413 OF THE SPECTATOR.

"THOUGH in yesterday's paper we considered "how every thing that is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to af- "fect the imagination with pleasure, we must own, that it is "impossible for us to assign the necessary cause of this pleas- "ure, because we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the "substance of a human soul, which might help us to discover "the conformity or disagreeableness of the one to the other; "and, therefore, for want of such a light, all that we can do "in speculations of this kind, is, to reflect on those operations "of the soul that are most agreeable, and to range, under their "proper heads, what is pleasing or displeasing to the mind, "without being able to trace out the several necessary and ef- "ficient causes from whence the pleasure or displeasure arises."

This sentence, considered as an introductory one, must be acknowledged to be very faulty. An introductory sentence should never contain any thing that can in any degree fatigue or puzzle the reader. When an Author is entering on a new branch of his subject, informing us of what he has done, and what he proposes further to do, we naturally expect, that he should express himself in the simplest and most perspicuous manner possible. But the sentence now before us is crowded and indistinct; containing three separate propositions, which, as I shall afterwards show, required separate sentences to have unfolded them. Mr. Addison's chief excellency, as a writer, lay in describing and painting. There he is great; but in methodising and reasoning, he is not so eminent. As, besides the general fault of prolixity and indistinctness, this sentence contains several inaccuracies, I shall be obliged to enter into a minute

minute diſcuſſion of its ſtructure and parts; a diſcuſſion, which to many readers will appear tedious, and which therefore they will naturally paſs over; but which, to thoſe who are ſtudying compoſition, I hope may prove of ſome benefit.

Though in yeſterday's paper we conſidered. The import of *though*, is, *notwithſtanding that*. When it appears in the beginning of a ſentence, its relative generally is *yet*: and it is employed to warn us, after we have been informed of ſome truth, that we are not to infer from it ſome other thing which we might perhaps have expected to follow: as, "Though virtue be the only road "to happineſs, yet it does not permit the unlimited gratification "of our deſires." Now it is plain, that there was no ſuch oppoſition between the ſubject of yeſterday's paper, and what the Author is now going to ſay, between his aſſerting a fact, and his not being able to aſſign the cauſe of that fact, as rendered the uſe of this adverſative particle, *though*, either neceſſary or proper in the introduction. *We conſidered how every thing that is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagination with pleaſure.* The adverb *how* ſignifies, either the means by which, or the manner in which, ſomething is done. But in truth, neither one nor other of theſe had been conſidered by our Author. He had illuſtrated the fact alone, that they do affect the imagination with pleaſure; and, with reſpect to the *quomodo* or the *how*, he is ſo far from having conſidered it, that he is juſt now going to ſhow that it cannot be explained, and that we muſt reſt contented with the knowledge of the fact alone, and of its purpoſe or final cauſe. *We muſt own, that it is impoſſible for us to aſſign the neceſſary cauſe* (he means, what is more commonly called the *efficient cauſe*) *of this pleaſure, becauſe we know neither the nature of an idea, nor the ſubſtance of a human ſoul. The ſubſtance of a human ſoul* is certainly a very uncouth expreſſion, and there appears no reaſon why he ſhould have varied from the word *nature*, which would have equally applied to *idea* and to *ſoul*.

Which might help us, our Author proceeds, *to diſcover the conformity or diſagreeableneſs of the one to the other.* The *which*, at the beginning of this member of the period, is ſurely ungrammatical, as it is a relative, without any antecedent in all the ſentence. It refers, by the conſtruction, *to the nature of an idea, or the ſubſtance of a human ſoul*; but this is by no means the reference

erence which the Author intended. His meaning is, that *our knowing* the nature of an idea, and the ſubſtance of a human ſoul, might help us to diſcover the conformity or diſagreeableneſs of the one to the other: and therefore the ſyntax abſolutely required the word *knowledge* to have been inſerted as the antecedent to *which*. I have before remarked, and the remark deſerves to be repeated, that nothing is a more certain ſign of careleſs compoſition than to make ſuch relatives as *which*, not refer to any preciſe expreſſion, but carry a looſe and vague relation to the general ſtrain of what had gone before. When our ſentences run into this form, we may be aſſured there is ſomething in the conſtruction of them that requires alteration. The phraſe of diſcovering *the conformity or diſagreeableneſs of the one to the other* is likewiſe exceptionable; for *diſagreeableneſs* neither forms a proper contraſt to the other word, *conformity*, nor expreſſes what the Author meant here, (as far as any meaning can be gathered from his words) that is, a certain unſuitableneſs or want of conformity to the nature of the ſoul. To ſay the truth, this member of the ſentence had much better have been omitted altogether. *The conformity or diſagreeableneſs of an idea to the ſubſtance of a human ſoul*, is a phraſe which conveys to the mind no diſtinct nor intelligent conception whatever. The Author had before given a ſufficient reaſon for his not aſſigning the efficient cauſe of thoſe pleaſures of the imagination, becauſe we neither know the nature of our own ideas nor of the ſoul: and this farther diſcuſſion about the conformity or diſagreeableneſs of the nature of the one, to the ſubſtance of the other, affords no clear nor uſeful illuſtration.

And therefore, the ſentence goes on, *for want of ſuch a light, all that we can do in ſpeculations of this kind, is, to reflect on thoſe operations of the ſoul that are moſt agreeable, and to range under their proper heads what is pleaſing or diſpleaſing to the mind.* The two expreſſions in the beginning of this member, *therefore*, and *for want of ſuch a light*, evidently refer to the ſame thing, and are quite ſynonimous. One or other of them, therefore, had better have been omitted. Inſtead of *to range under their proper heads*, the language would have been ſmoother, if *their* had been left out. *Without being able to trace out the ſeveral neceſſary and efficient cauſes from whence the pleaſure or diſpleaſure ariſes.* The expreſſion,

expreſſion, *from whence*, though ſeemingly juſtified by very frequent uſage, is taxed by Dr. Johnſon as a vicious mode of ſpeech; ſeeing *whence* alone, has all the power of *from whence*, which therefore appears an unneceſſary reduplication. I am inclined to think, that the whole of this laſt member of the ſentence had better have been dropped. The period might have cloſed with full propriety, at the words, *pleaſing or diſpleaſing to the mind.* All that follows, ſuggeſts no idea that had not been fully conveyed in the preceding part of the ſentence. It is a mere expletive adjection which might be omitted, not only without injury to the meaning, but to the great relief of a ſentence already labouring under the multitude of words.

Having now finiſhed the analyſis of this long ſentence, I am inclined to be of opinion, that if, on any occaſion, we can adventure to alter Mr. Addiſon's Style, it may be done to advantage here, by breaking down this period, in the following manner: "In yeſterday's paper, we have ſhown that every thing "which is great, new, or beautiful, is apt to affect the imagina-"tion with pleaſure. We muſt own, that it is impoſſible for us to "aſſign the efficient cauſe of this pleaſure, becauſe we know "not the nature either of an idea, or of the human ſoul. All "that we can do, therefore, in ſpeculations of this kind, is to "reflect on the operations of the ſoul, which are moſt agreea-"ble, and to range under proper heads, what is pleaſing or diſ-"pleaſing to the mind." We proceed now to the examination of the following ſentences.

"Final cauſes lie more bare and open to our obſervation, as "there are often a great variety that belong to the ſame effect; "and theſe, though they are not altogether ſo ſatisfactory, are "generally more uſeful than the other, as they give us greater "occaſion of admiring the goodneſs and wiſdom of the firſt "Contriver."

Though ſome difference might be traced between the ſenſe of *bare* and *open*, yet, as they are here employed, they are ſo nearly ſynonimous, that one of them was ſufficient. It would have been enough to have ſaid, *Final cauſes lie more open to obſervation.* One can ſcarcely help obſerving here, that the obviouſneſs of final cauſes does not proceed, as Mr. Addiſon ſuppoſes, from a variety of them concurring in the ſame effect,

which

which is often not the caſe; but from our being able to aſcertain more clearly, from our own experience, the congruity of a final cauſe with the circumſtances of our condition; whereas the conſtituent parts of ſubjects, whence efficient cauſes proceed, lie for the moſt part beyond the reach of our faculties. But as this remark reſpects the thought more than the Style, it is ſufficient for us to obſerve, that when he ſays, *a great variety that belong to the ſame effect*, the expreſſion, ſtrictly conſidered, is not altogether proper. The acceſſory is properly ſaid to belong to the principal; not the principal to the acceſſory. Now an effect is conſidered as the acceſſory or conſequence of its cauſe; and therefore, though we might well ſay a variety of effects belong to the ſame cauſe, it ſeems not ſo proper to ſay, that a variety of cauſes belong to the ſame effect.

"One of the final cauſes of our delight in any thing that is "great, may be this: The Supreme Author of our being has "ſo formed the ſoul of man, that nothing but himſelf can be "its laſt, adequate, and proper happineſs. Becauſe, therefore, "a great part of our happineſs muſt ariſe from the contem- "plation of his being, that he might give our ſouls a juſt reliſh "of ſuch a contemplation, he has made them naturally delight "in the apprehenſion of what is great or unlimited."

The concurrence of two conjunctions, *becauſe*, *therefore*, forms rather a harſh and unpleaſing beginning of the laſt of theſe ſentences; and, in the cloſe, one would think, that the Author might have deviſed a happier word than *apprehenſion*, to be applied to what is *unlimited*. But that I may not be thought hypercritical, I ſhall make no farther obſervations on theſe ſentences.

"Our admiration, which is a very pleaſing emotion of the "mind, immediately riſes at the conſideration of any object "that takes up a good deal of room in the fancy, and, by con- "ſequence, will improve into the higheſt pitch of aſtoniſh- "ment and devotion, when we contemplate his nature, that "is neither circumſcribed by time nor place, nor to be com- "prehended by the largeſt capacity of a created being."

Here, our Author's Style riſes beautifully along with the thought. However inaccurate he may ſometimes be, when coolly

coolly philoſophiſing, yet, whenever his fancy is awakened by deſcription, or his mind, as here, warmed with ſome glowing ſentiment, he preſently becomes great, and diſcovers, in his language, the hand of a maſter. Every one muſt obſerve, with what felicity this period is conſtructed. The words are long and majeſtic. The members riſe one above another, and conduct the ſentence, at laſt, to that full and harmonious cloſe, which leaves upon the mind ſuch an impreſſion, as the Author intended to leave, of ſomething uncommonly great, awful, and magnificent.

"He has annexed a ſecret pleaſure to the idea of any thing "that is new or uncommon, that he might encourage us in "the purſuit of knowledge, and engage us to ſearch into the "wonders of creation; for every new idea brings ſuch a "pleaſure along with it, as rewards the pains we have taken "in its acquiſition, and conſequently, ſerves as a motive to put "us upon freſh diſcoveries."

The language, in this ſentence, is clear and preciſe: only, we cannot but obſerve, in this, and the two following ſentences, which are conſtructed in the ſame manner, a ſtrong proof of Mr. Addiſon's unreaſonable partiality to the particle, *that*, in preference to *which*. *Annexed a ſecret pleaſure to the idea of any thing that is new or uncommon, that he might encourage us.* Here the firſt *that* ſtands for a relative pronoun, and the next *that*, at the diſtance only of four words, is a conjunction. This confuſion of ſounds ſerves to embarraſs Style. Much better, ſure, to have ſaid, *the idea of any thing which is new or uncommon, that he might encourage.* The expreſſion with which the ſentence concludes, *a motive to put us upon freſh diſcoveries*, is flat, and, in ſome degree, improper. He ſhould have ſaid, *put us upon making freſh diſcoveries*; or rather, *ſerves as a motive inciting us to make freſh diſcoveries.*

"He has made every thing that is beautiful in our own "ſpecies, pleaſant, that all creatures might be tempted to mul-"tiply their kind, and fill the world with inhabitants; for, 'tis "very remarkable, that, wherever nature is croſt in the produc-"tion of a monſter, (the reſult of any unnatural mixture) the "breed is incapable of propagating its likeneſs, and of found-

"ing

" ing a new order of creatures; ſo that, unleſs all animals were " allured by the beauty of their own ſpecies, generation would " be at an end, and the earth unpeopled."

Here we muſt, however reluctantly, return to the employment of cenſure: for this is among the worſt ſentences our Author ever wrote; and contains a variety of blemiſhes. Taken as a whole, it is extremely deficient in unity. Inſtead of a complete propoſition, it contains a ſort of chain of reaſoning, the links of which are ſo ill put together, that it is with difficulty we can trace the connexion; and, unleſs we take the trouble of peruſing it ſeveral times, it will leave nothing on the mind but an indiſtinct and obſcure impreſſion.

Beſides this general fault, reſpecting the meaning, it contains ſome great inaccuracies in language. Firſt, God's having made every thing which *is beautiful in our own ſpecies*, (that is, in the human ſpecies) *pleaſant*, is certainly no motive for *all creatures*, for beaſts, and birds, and fiſhes, *to multiply their kind*. What the author meant to ſay, though he has expreſſed himſelf in ſo erroneous a manner, undoubtedly was, " In all the dif- " ferent orders of creatures, he has made every thing, which " is beautiful, in their own ſpecies, pleaſant, that all creatures " might be tempted to multiply their kind." The ſecond member of the ſentence is ſtill worſe. *For, it is very remarkable, that wherever nature is croſt in the production of a monſter, &c.* The reaſon which he here gives, for the preceding aſſertion, intimated by the caſual particle *for*, is far from being obvious. The connexion of thought is not readily apparent, and would have required an intermediate ſtep, to render it diſtinct. But, what does he mean, by *nature being croſt in the production of a monſter?* One might underſtand him to mean, " diſappointed in " its intention of producing a monſter," as when we ſay, one is croſt in his purſuits, we mean, that he is diſappointed in accompliſhing the end which he intended. Had he ſaid *croſt by the production of a monſter*, the ſenſe would have been more intelligible. But the proper rectification of the expreſſion would be to inſert the adverb *as*, before the prepoſition *in*, after this manner; *wherever nature is croſt, as in the production of a monſter.* The inſertion of this particle *as*, throws ſo much light on the conſtruction of this member of the ſentence, that I am very

much inclined to believe, it had ſtood thus, originally, in our Author's manuſcript; and that the preſent reading is a typographical error, which, having crept into the firſt edition of the Spectator, ran through all the ſubſequent ones.

" In the laſt place, he has made every thing that is beauti-
" ful, in all other objects, pleaſant, or rather has made ſo many
" objects appear beautiful, that he might render the whole
" creation more gay and delightful. He has given almoſt
" every thing about us the power of raiſing an agreeable idea
" in the imagination; ſo that it is impoſſible for us to behold
" his works with coldneſs or indifference, and to ſurvey ſo
" many beauties without a ſecret ſatisfaction and complacency."

The idea, here, is ſo juſt, and the language ſo clear, flowing, and agreeable, that, to remark any diffuſeneſs which may be attributed to theſe ſentences, would be juſtly eſteemed hypercritical.

" Things would have made but a poor appearance to the
" eye, if we ſaw them only in their proper figures and motions:
" and what reaſon can we aſſign for their exciting in us, many
" of thoſe ideas which are different from any thing that exiſts
" in the objects themſelves, (for ſuch are light and colours)
" were it not to add ſupernumerary ornaments to the univerſe,
" and make it more agreeable to the imagination?"

Our Author is now entering on a theory, which he is about to illuſtrate, if not with much philoſophical accuracy, yet, with great beauty of fancy, and glow of expreſſion. A ſtrong inſtance of his want of accuracy, appears in the manner in which he opens the ſubject. For what meaning is there in things *exciting in us many of thoſe ideas which are different from any thing that exiſts in the objects?* No one, ſure, ever imagined, that our ideas exiſt in the objects. Ideas, it is agreed on all hands, can exiſt no where but in the mind. What Mr. Locke's philoſophy teaches, and what our Author ſhould have ſaid, is *exciting in us many ideas of qualities which are different from any thing that exiſts in the objects.* The ungraceful parentheſis which follows, *for ſuch are light and colours*, had far better have been avoided, and incorporated with the reſt of the Sentence, in this manner: " exciting in us many ideas of qualities, ſuch as light

" and

" and colours, which are different from any thing that exists " in the objects."

" We are every where entertained with pleasing shows, and " apparitions. We discover imaginary glories in the heavens, " and in the earth, and see some of this visionary beauty poured " out upon the whole creation; but what a rough unsightly " sketch of nature should we be entertained with, did all her " colouring disappear, and the several distinctions of light and " shade vanish? In short, our souls are delightfully lost and be- " wildered in a pleasing delusion; and we walk about like the " enchanted hero of a romance, who sees beautiful castles, " woods, and meadows; and at the same time, hears the warb- " ling of birds, and the purling of streams; but, upon the " finishing of some secret spell, the fantastic scene breaks up, " and the disconsolate knight finds himself on a barren heath, " or in a solitary desert."

After having been obliged to point out several inaccuracies, I return with much more pleasure to the display of beauties, for which we have now full scope; for these two sentences are such as do the highest honour to Mr. Addison's talent as a writer. Warmed with the idea he had laid hold of, his delicate sensibility to the beauty of nature, is finely displayed in the illustration of it. The style is flowing and full, without being too diffuse. It is flowery, but not gaudy; elevated, but not ostentatious.

Amidst this blaze of beauties, it is necessary for us to remark one or two inaccuracies. When it is said, towards the close of the first of those sentences, *what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be entertained with*, the preposition *with*, should have been placed at the beginning, rather than at the end of this member; and the word *entertained*, is both improperly applied here, and carelessly repeated from the former part of the sentence. It was there employed according to its more common use, as relating to agreeable objects. *We are every where entertained with pleasing shows.* Here, it would have been more proper to have changed the phrase, and said, *with what a rough unsightly sketch of nature should we be presented.* At the close of the second sentence, where it is said, *the fantastic scene breaks*

breaks up, the expreſſion is lively, but not altogether juſtifiable. An aſſembly *breaks up*; a ſcene *cloſes* or *diſappears*.

Bating theſe two ſlight inaccuracies, the Style, here, is not only correct, but perfectly elegant. The moſt ſtriking beauty of the paſſage ariſes from the happy ſimile which the Author employs, and the fine illuſtration which it gives to the thought. The *enchanted hero*, *the beautiful caſtles*, the *fantaſtic ſcene*, the *ſecret ſpell*, the *diſconſolate knight*, are terms choſen with the utmoſt felicity, and ſtrongly recal all thoſe romantic ideas with which he intended to amuſe our imagination. Few authors are more ſucceſsful in their imagery than Mr. Addiſon; and few paſſages in his works, or in thoſe of any author, are more beautiful and pictureſque, than that on which we have been commenting.

"It is not improbable, that ſomething like this may be the "ſtate of the ſoul after its firſt ſeparation, in reſpect of the "images it will receive from matter; though, indeed, the "ideas of colours are ſo pleaſing and beautiful in the imagina-"tion, that it is poſſible the ſoul will not be deprived of "them, but, perhaps, find them excited by ſome other occa-"ſional cauſe, as they are, at preſent, by the different impreſ-"ſions of the ſubtile matter on the organ of ſight."

As all human things, after having attained the ſummit, begin to decline, we muſt acknowledge, that, in this ſentence, there is a ſenſible falling off from the beauty of what went before. It is broken, and deficient in unity. Its parts are not ſufficiently compacted. It contains, beſides, ſome faulty expreſſions. When it is ſaid, *ſomething like this may be the ſtate of the ſoul*, to the pronoun *this*, there is no determined antecedent; it refers to the general import of the preceding deſcription, which, as I have ſeveral times remarked, always rendered Style clumſy and inelegant, if not obſcure—*the ſtate of the ſoul after its firſt ſeparation*, appears to be an incomplete phraſe, and *firſt*, ſeems an uſeleſs, and even an improper word. More diſtinct if he had ſaid, *ſtate of the ſoul immediately on its ſeparation from the body*. The adverb *perhaps*, is redundant after having juſt before ſaid, *it is poſſible*.

"I have

" I have here ſuppoſed, that my reader is acquainted with " that great modern diſcovery, which is, at preſent, univerſal- " ly acknowledged by all the inquirers into natural philoſophy; " namely, that light and colours, as apprehended by the imag- " ination, are only ideas in the mind, and not qualities that " have any exiſtence in matter. As this is a truth which has " been proved inconteſtibly by many modern philoſophers, and " is, indeed, one of the fineſt ſpeculations in that ſcience, if " the Engliſh reader would ſee the notion explained at large, " he may find it in the eighth chapter of the ſecond book of " Mr. Lock's Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding."

In theſe two concluding ſentences, the Author, haſtening to finiſh, appears to write rather careleſsly. In the firſt of them, a manifeſt tautology occurs, when he ſpeaks of what is *univerſally acknowledged by all inquirers*. In the ſecond, when he calls *a truth which has been inconteſtably proved*; firſt, a *ſpeculation*, and afterwards *a notion*, the language ſurely is not very accurate. When he adds, *one of the fineſt ſpeculations in that ſcience*, it does not, at firſt, appear what ſcience he means. One would imagine, he meant to refer to *modern philoſophers*; for *natural philoſophy* (to which, doubtleſs, he refers) ſtands at much too great a diſtance to be the proper or obvious antecedent to the pronoun *that*. The circumſtance towards the cloſe, *if the Engliſh reader would ſee the notion explained at large, he may find it*, is properly taken notice of by the Author of the Elements of Criticiſm, as wrong arranged; and is rectified thus: *the Engliſh reader, if he would ſee the notion explained at large, may find it, &c.*

In concluding the Examination of this Paper, we may obſerve, that, though not a very long one, it exhibits a ſtriking view both of the beauties, and the defects, of Mr. Addiſon's Style. It contains ſome of the beſt, and ſome of the worſt ſentences, that are to be found in his works. But upon the whole, it is an agreeable and elegant Eſſay.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXIII.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN No. 414 OF THE SPECTATOR.

"IF we conſider the works of nature and art, as "they are qualified to entertain the imagination, we ſhall find "the laſt very defective in compariſon of the former; for "though they may ſometimes appear as beautiful or ſtrange, "they can have nothing in them of that vaſtneſs and immenſity "which afford ſo great an entertainment to the mind of the "beholder."

I had occaſion formerly to obſerve, that an introductory ſentence ſhould always be ſhort and ſimple, and contain no more matter than is neceſſary for opening the ſubject. This ſentence leads to a repetition of this obſervation, as it contains both an aſſertion and the proof of that aſſertion; two things which, for the moſt part, but eſpecially at firſt ſetting out, are with more advantage kept ſeparate. It would certainly have been better, if this ſentence had contained only the aſſertion, ending with the word *former*: and if a new one had then begun, entering on the proofs of nature's ſuperiority over art, which is the ſubject continued to the end of the paragraph. The proper diviſion of the period I ſhall point out, after having firſt made a few obſervations which occur on different parts of it.

If we conſider the works. Perhaps it might have been preferable, if our Author had begun, with ſaying, *When we conſider the works.* Diſcourſe ought always to begin, when it is poſſible, with a clear propoſition. The *if*, which is here employed, converts the ſentence into a ſuppoſition, which is always in ſome degree entangling, and proper to be uſed only when the courſe of reaſoning renders it neceſſary. As this obſervation however may, perhaps, be conſidered as over-refined, and

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as the ſenſe would have remained the ſame in either form of expreſſion, I do not mean to charge our Author with any error on this account. We cannot abſolve him from inaccuracy in what immediately follows—*the works of nature and art.* It is the ſcope of the Author throughout this whole paper, to compare nature and art together, and to oppoſe them in ſeveral views to each other. Certainly, therefore, in the beginning, he ought to have kept them as diſtinct as poſſible, by interpoſing the prepoſition, and ſaying *the works of Nature and of Art.* As the words ſtand at preſent, they would lead us to think that he is going to treat of theſe works, not as contraſted, but as connected; as united in forming one whole. When I ſpeak of body and ſoul as united in the human nature, I would interpoſe neither articles nor prepoſition between them; "Man "is compounded of Soul and Body." But the caſe is altered, if, I mean to diſtinguiſh them from each other; then I repreſent them as ſeparate; and ſay, "I am to treat of the intereſts "of the Soul, and of the Body."

Though they may ſometimes appear as beautiful or ſtrange. I cannot help conſidering this as a looſe member of the period. It does not clearly appear at firſt what the antecedent is to *they.* In reading onwards, we ſee the works of art to be meant; but from the ſtructure of the ſentence, *they* might be underſtood to refer to *the former*, as well as to *the laſt.* In what follows, there is a greater ambiguity—*may ſometimes appear as beautiful or ſtrange.* It is very doubtful in what ſenſe we are to underſtand *as*, in this paſſage. For, according as it is accented in reading, it may ſignify, that *they appear equally beautiful or ſtrange*, to wit, with the works of nature; and then it has the force of the Latin *tam:* or it may ſignify no more than that they *appear in the light of beautiful and ſtrange;* and then it has the force of the Latin *tanquam*, without importing any compariſon. An expreſſion ſo ambiguous, is always faulty; and it is doubly ſo here; becauſe, if the Author intended the former ſenſe, and meant (as ſeems moſt probable) to employ *as* for a mark of *compariſon*, it was neceſſary to have mentioned both the compared objects; whereas only one member of the compariſon is here mentioned, viz. the works of art; and if he intended the latter ſenſe, *as* was in that caſe ſuperfluous and encumbering, and he had better have ſaid ſimply, *appear beautiful or ſtrange.*

The

The epithet *ſtrange*, which Mr. Addiſon applies to the works of art, cannot be praiſed. *Strange works*, appears not by any means a happy expreſſion to ſignify what he here intends, which is new or uncommon.

The ſentence concludes with much harmony and dignity; *they can have nothing in them of that vaſtneſs and immenſity which afford ſo great an entertainment to the mind of the beholder.* There is here a fullneſs and grandeur of expreſſion well ſuited to the ſubject; though, perhaps, *entertainment* is not quite the proper word for expreſſing the effect which vaſtneſs and immenſity have upon the mind. Reviewing the obſervations that have been made on this period, it might, I think, with advantage, be reſolved into two ſentences ſomewhat after this manner: "When we conſider the works of nature and of art, as they "are qualified to entertain the imagination, we ſhall find the "latter very defective in compariſon of the former. The works "of art may ſometimes appear no leſs beautiful or uncommon "than thoſe of nature; but they can have nothing of that vaſt- "neſs and immenſity which ſo highly tranſport the mind of "the beholder."

"The one," proceeds our author in the next ſentence, "may "be as polite and delicate as the other; but can never ſhew "herſelf ſo auguſt and magnificent in the deſign.

The *one* and the *other*, in the firſt part of this ſentence, muſt unqueſtionably refer to the *works of nature and of art.* For of theſe he had been ſpeaking immediately before; and with reference to the plural word, *works*, had employed the plural pronoun *they.* But in the courſe of the ſentence, he drops this conſtruction; and paſſes very incongruouſly to the perſonification of art—*can never ſhow herſelf.* To render his Style conſiſtent, *art*, and not *the works of art*, ſhould have been made the nominative in this ſentence. *Art may be as polite and delicate as nature, but can never ſhow herſelf. Polite* is a term oftener applied to perſons and to manners, than to things; and is employed to ſignify their being highly civilized. Poliſhed, or refined, was the idea which the Author had in view. Though the general turn of this ſentence be elegant, yet, in order to render it perfect, I muſt obſerve, that the concluding words, *in the deſign*, ſhould either have been altogether omitted, or

ſomething

ſomething ſhould have been properly oppoſed to them in the preceding member of the period, thus: "Art may, in the "execution, be as poliſhed and delicate as nature; but, in the "deſign, can never ſhow herſelf ſo auguſt and magnificent."

"There is ſomething more bold and maſterly in the rough, "careleſs ſtrokes of nature, than in the nice touches and em-"belliſhments of art."

This ſentence is perfectly happy and elegant; and carries, in all the expreſſions, that *curioſa felicitas*, for which Mr. Addiſon is ſo often remarkable. *Bold and maſterly*, are words applied with the utmoſt propriety. The *ſtrokes of nature*, are finely oppoſed to *the touches of art*; and the *rough ſtrokes* to the *nice touches*; the former, painting the freedom and eaſe of nature, and the other, the diminutive exactneſs of art; while both are introduced before us as different performers, and their reſpective merits in execution very juſtly contraſted with each other.

"The beauties of the moſt ſtately garden or palace lie in a "narrow compaſs, the imagination immediately runs them over, "and requires ſomething elſe to gratify her; but in the wild "fields of nature, the ſight wanders up and down without "confinement, and is fed with an infinite variety of images, "without any certain ſtint or number."

This ſentence is not altogether ſo correct and elegant as the former. It carries, however, in the main, the character of our Author's Style; not ſtrictly accurate, but agreeable, eaſy, and unaffected; enlivened too with a ſlight perſonification of the imagination, which gives a gaiety to the period. Perhaps it had been better, if this perſonification of the imagination, with which the ſentence is introduced, had been continued throughout, and not changed unneceſſarily, and even improperly, into *ſight*, in the ſecond member, which is contrary both to unity and elegance. It might have ſtood thus: *the imagination immediately runs them over, and requires ſomething elſe to gratify her; but in the wild fields of nature, ſhe wanders up and down without confinement.* The epithet *ſtately*, which the Author uſes in the beginning of the ſentence, applies with more propriety to *palaces*, than to *gardens*. The cloſe of the ſentence, *without any certain ſtint or number*, may be objected to, as both ſuperfluous, and ungraceful. It might perhaps have terminated better in this

manner: *ſhe is fed with an infinite variety of images, and wanders up and down without confinement.*

" For this reaſon, we always find the poet in love with a " country life, where nature appears in the greateſt perfection, " and furniſhes out all thoſe ſcenes that are moſt apt to delight " the imagination."

There is nothing in this ſentence to attract particular attention. One would think it was rather the *country*, than a *country life*, on which the remark here made ſhould reſt. A *country life* may be productive of ſimplicity of manners, and of other virtues; but it is to *the country* itſelf, that the properties here mentioned belong, of diſplaying the beauties of nature, and furniſhing thoſe ſcenes which delight the imagination.

" But though there are ſeveral of theſe wild ſcenes that are " more delightful than any artificial ſhows, yet we find the " works of nature ſtill more pleaſant, the more they reſemble " thoſe of art; for in this caſe, our pleaſure riſes from a double " principle; from the agreeableneſs of the objects to the eye, " and from their ſimilitude to other objects; we are pleaſed, " as well with comparing their beauties, as with ſurveying them, " and can repreſent them to our minds either as copies or as " originals. Hence it is, that we take delight in a proſpect " which is well laid out, and diverſified with fields and mead- " ows, woods and rivers; in thoſe accidental landſcapes of " trees, clouds, and cities, that are ſometimes found in the veins " of marble, in the curious fretwork of rocks and grottos; and, " in a word, in any thing that hath ſuch a degree of variety " and regularity as may ſeem the effect of deſign, in what we " call the works of chance."

The Style in the two ſentences, which compoſe this paragraph, is ſmooth and perſpicuous. It lies open in ſome places to criticiſm; but leſt the reader ſhould be tired of what he may conſider as petty remarks, I ſhall paſs over any which theſe ſentences ſuggeſt; the rather too, as the idea which they preſent to us, of nature's reſembling art, or art's being conſidered as an original, and nature as a copy, ſeems not very diſtinct nor well brought out, nor indeed very material to our Author's purpoſe.

" If

"If the products of nature rise in value, according as they "more or less resemble those of art, we may be sure that ar- "tificial works receive a greater advantage from the resemblance "of such as are natural; because here the similitude is not only "pleasant, but the pattern more perfect."

It is necessary to our present design, to point out two considerable inaccuracies which occur in this sentence. *If the products* (he had better have said the *productions*) *of nature rise in value according as they more or less resemble those of art.* Does he mean, that these productions *rise in value* both according as they *more resemble*, and as they *less resemble*, those of art? His meaning undoubtedly is, that they rise in value only, according as they *more resemble* them: and, therefore, either of these words, *or less*, must be struck out, or the sentence must run thus—*productions of nature rise or sink in value, according as they more or less resemble.* The present construction of the sentence has plainly been owing to hasty and careless writing.

The other inaccuracy is towards the end of the sentence, and serves to illustrate a rule which I formerly gave, concerning the position of adverbs. The Author says, *because here, the similitude is not only pleasant, but the pattern more perfect.* Here, by the position of the adverb *only*, we are led to imagine that he is going to give some other property of the similitude, that it is *not only pleasant*, as he says, but more than pleasant; it is useful, or, on some account or other, valuable. Whereas, he is going to oppose another thing to the *similitude* itself, and not to this property of its being *pleasant*; and, therefore, the right collocation, beyond doubt, was, *because here, not only the similitude is pleasant, but the pattern more perfect*: the contrast lying, not between *pleasant and more perfect*, but between *similitude and pattern.* Much of the clearness and neatness of Style depends on such attentions as these.

"The prettiest landscape I ever saw, was one drawn on the "walls of a dark room, which stood opposite on one side to a "navigable river, and, on the other, to a park. The experi- "ment is very common in optics."

In the description of the landscape which follows, Mr. Addison is abundantly happy; but in this introduction to it, he is obscure and indistinct. One who had not seen the experi-

ment

ment of the camera obſcura, could comprehend nothing of what he meant. And even, after we underſtand what he points at, we are at ſome loſs, whether to underſtand his deſcription as of one continued landſcape, or of two different ones, produced by the projection of the two camera obſcuras on oppoſite walls. The ſcene, which I am inclined to think Mr. Addiſon here refers to, is Greenwich park, with the proſpect of the Thames, as ſeen by a camera obſcura, which is placed in a ſmall room in the upper ſtory of the obſervatory; where I remember to have ſeen, many years ago, the whole ſcene here deſcribed, correſponding ſo much to Mr. Addiſon's account of it in this paſſage, that, at the time, it recalled it to my memory.

As the obſervatory ſtands in the middle of the park, it overlooks, from one ſide, both the river and the park; and the objects afterwards mentioned, the ſhips, the trees, and the deer, are preſented in one view, without needing any aſſiſtance from oppoſite walls. Put into plainer language, the ſentence might run thus: "The prettieſt landſcape I ever ſaw, was one formed by a camera obſcura, a common optical inſtrument, on "the wall of a dark room, which overlooked a navigable river "and a park."

"Here you might diſcover the waves and fluctuations of "the water in ſtrong and proper colours, with the picture of "a ſhip entering at one end, and ſailing by degrees through "the whole piece. On another, there appeared the green "ſhadows of trees, waving to and fro with the wind, and "herds of deer among them in miniature, leaping about upon "the wall."

Bating one or two ſmall inaccuracies, this is beautiful and lively painting. The principal inaccuracy lies in the connexion of the two ſentences, *Here*, and *On another*. I ſuppoſe the Author meant, on *one ſide*, and *on another ſide*. As it ſtands, *another* is ungrammatical, having nothing to which it refers. But the fluctuations of the water, the ſhip entering and ſailing on by degrees, the trees waving in the wind, and the herds of deer among them leaping about, is all very elegant, and gives a beautiful conception of the ſcene meant to be deſcribed.

"I muſt confeſs the novelty of ſuch a ſight, may be one "occaſion of its pleaſantneſs to the imagination; but certainly

"the

"the chief reaſon, is its near reſemblance to nature; as it "does not only, like other pictures, give the colour and figure, "but the motions of the things it repreſents."

In this ſentence there is nothing remarkable, either to be praiſed or blamed. In the concluſion, inſtead of *the things it repreſents*, the regularity of correct Style requires *the things which it repreſents*. In the beginning, as *one occaſion* and the *chief reaſon* are oppoſed to one another, I ſhould think it better to have repeated the ſame word; *one reaſon of its pleaſantneſs to the imagination, but certainly the chief reaſon is, &c.*

"We have before obſerved, that there is generally, in na- "ture, ſomething more grand and auguſt than what we meet "with in the curioſities of art. When, therefore, we ſee this "imitated in any meaſure, it gives us a nobler and more ex- "alted kind of pleaſure, than what we receive from the nicer "and more accurate productions of art."

It would have been better to have avoided terminating theſe two ſentences in a manner ſo ſimilar to each other; *curioſities of art—productions of art.*

"On this account, our Engliſh gardens are not ſo enter- "taining to the fancy as thoſe in France and Italy, where we "ſee a large extent of ground covered over with an agreeable "mixture of garden and foreſt, which repreſents every where "an artificial rudeneſs, much more charming than that neat- "neſs and elegance which we meet with in thoſe of our own "country."

The expreſſion *repreſents every where an artificial rudeneſs*, is ſo inaccurate, that I am inclined to think, what ſtood in Mr. Addiſon's manuſcript muſt have been, *preſents every where.* For the mixture of garden and foreſt does not *repreſent*, but actually *exhibits* or *preſents*, artificial rudeneſs. That mixture *repreſents* indeed *natural rudeneſs*, that is, is deſigned to imitate it; but it in reality *is*, and *preſents*, *artificial rudeneſs.*

"It might indeed be of ill conſequence to the public, as "well as unprofitable to private perſons, to alienate ſo much "ground from paſturage and the plough, in many parts of a "country that is ſo well peopled and cultivated to a far great- "er advantage. But why may not a whole eſtate be thrown "into a kind of garden by frequent plantations, that may turn

"as

"as much to the profit as the pleasure of the owner? A marsh "overgrown with willows, or a mountain shaded with oaks, "are not only more beautiful, but more beneficial, than when "they lie bare and unadorned. Fields of corn make a pleasant "prospect; and if the walls were a little taken care of that "lie between them, and the natural embroidery of the mead-"ows were helped and improved by some small additions of "art, and the several rows of hedges were set off by trees and "flowers that the soil was capable of receiving, a man might "make a pretty landscape of his own possessions."

The ideas here are just, and the Style is easy and perspicuous, though in some places bordering on the careless. In that passage, for instance, *if the walks were a little taken care of that lie between them*, one member is clearly out of its place, and the turn of the phrase, *a little taken care of*, is vulgar and colloquial. Much better, if it had run thus: *if a little care were bestowed on the walks that lie between them.*

"Writers who have given us an account of China, tell us, "the inhabitants of that country laugh at the plantations of "our Europeans, which are laid out by the rule and the line; "because, they say, any one may place trees in equal rows and "uniform figures. They choose rather to show a genius in "works of this nature, and therefore always conceal the art by "which they direct themselves. They have a word, it seems, "in their Language, by which they express the particular "beauty of a plantation, that thus strikes the imagination at "first sight, without discovering what it is that has so agreea-"ble an effect."

These sentences furnish occasion for no remark, except that in the last of them, *particular* is improperly used instead of *peculiar*; *the peculiar beauty of a plantation that thus strikes the imagination*, was the phrase to have conveyed the idea which the Author meant; namely, the beauty which distinguishes it from plantations of another kind.

"Our British gardeners, on the contrary, instead of hu-"mouring nature, love to deviate from it as much as possible. "Our trees rise in cones, globes and pyramids. We see the "marks of the scissors on every plant and bush."

These

Theſe ſentences are lively and elegant. They make an agreeable diverſity from the ſtrain of thoſe which went before; and are marked with the hand of Mr. Addiſon. I have to remark only, that, in the phraſe, *inſtead of humouring nature, love to deviate from it—humouring and deviating*, are terms not properly oppoſed to each other; a ſort of perſonification of nature is begun in the firſt of them, which is not ſupported in the ſecond. To *humouring*, was to have been oppoſed, *thwarting*; or if *deviating* was kept, *following*, or *going along with nature*, was to have been uſed.

"I do not know whether I am ſingular in my opinion, but "for my own part, I would rather look upon a tree, in all its "luxuriancy and diffuſion of boughs and branches, than when "it is thus cut and trimmed into a mathematical figure; and "cannot but fancy that an orchard, in flower, looks infinitely "more delightful, than all the little labyrinths of the moſt fin-"iſhed parterre."

This ſentence is extremely harmonious, and every way beautiful. It carries all the characteriſtics of our Author's natural, graceful, and flowing language. A tree, in *all its luxuriancy and diffuſion of boughs and branches*, is a remarkably happy expreſſion. The Author ſeems to become luxuriant in deſcribing an object which is ſo, and thereby renders the ſound a perfect echo to the ſenſe.

"But as our great modellers of gardens have their maga-"zines of plants to diſpoſe of, it is very natural in them, to "tear up all the beautiful plantations of fruit trees, and con-"trive a plan that may moſt turn to their profit, in taking off "their evergreens, and the like moveable plants, with which "their ſhops are plentifully ſtocked."

An author ſhould always ſtudy to conclude, when it is in his power, with grace and dignity. It is ſomewhat unfortunate, that this paper did not end, as it might very well have done, with the former beautiful period. The impreſſion left on the mind by the beauties of nature, with which he had been entertaining us, would then have been more agreeable. But in this ſentence there is a great falling off; and we return with pain from thoſe pleaſing objects, to the inſignificant contents of a nurſery-man's ſhop.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXIV.

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF THE STYLE IN A PASSAGE OF DEAN SWIFT's WRITINGS.

MY deſign in the four preceding Lectures, was not merely to appreciate the merit of Mr. Addiſon's Style, by pointing out the faults and the beauties that are mingled in the writings of that great author. They were not compoſed with any view to gain the reputation of a critic; but intended for the aſſiſtance of ſuch as are deſirous of ſtudying the moſt proper and elegant conſtruction of ſentences in the Engliſh Language. To ſuch, it is hoped, that they may be of advantage; as the proper application of rules reſpecting the Style, will always be beſt learned by means of the illuſtration which examples afford. I conceived the examples, taken from the writings of an Author ſo juſtly eſteemed, would, on that account, not only be more attended to, but would alſo produce this good effect, of familiariſing thoſe who ſtudy compoſition with the Style of a writer, from whom they may, upon the whole, derive great benefit. With the ſame view, I ſhall, in this Lecture, give one critical exerciſe more of the ſame kind, upon the Style of an Author of a different character, Dean Swift; repeating the intimation I gave formerly, that ſuch as ſtand in need of no aſſiſtance of this kind, and who, therefore, will naturally conſider ſuch minute diſcuſſions concerning the propriety of words, and ſtructure of ſentences, as beneath their attention, had beſt paſs over what will ſeem to them a tedious part of the work.

I formerly gave the general character of Dean Swift's Style. He is eſteemed one of our moſt correct writers. His Style is of the plain and ſimple kind; free from all affectation, and all ſuperfluity; perſpicuous, manly, and pure. Theſe are its advantages

vantages. But we are not to look for much ornament and grace in it.* On the contrary, Dean Swift ſeems to have ſlighted and deſpiſed the ornaments of Language, rather than to have ſtudied them. His arrangement is often looſe and negligent. In elegant, muſical, and figurative Language, he is much inferior to Mr. Addiſon. His manner of writing carries in it the character of one who reſts altogether upon his ſenſe, and aims at no more than giving his meaning in a clear and conciſe manner.

That part of his writings, which I ſhall now examine, is the beginning of his treatiſe, entitled, "A Propoſal for correcting, "improving, and aſcertaining the Engliſh Tongue," in a Letter addreſſed to the Earl of Oxford, then Lord High Treaſurer. I was led, by the nature of the ſubject, to chooſe this treatiſe; but, in juſtice to the Dean, I muſt obſerve, that, after having examined it, I do not eſteem it one of his moſt correct productions; but am apt to think it has been more haſtily compoſed than ſome other of them. It bears a title and form of a Letter; but it is, however, in truth, a Treatiſe deſigned for the public: and therefore, in examining it, we cannot proceed upon the indulgence due to an epiſtolary correſpondence. When a man addreſſes himſelf to a friend only, it is ſufficient if he makes himſelf fully underſtood by him; but when an Author writes for the public, whether he aſſume the form of an epiſtle or not, we are always entitled to expect, that he ſhall expreſs himſelf with accuracy and care. Our Author begins thus:

"What I had the honour of mentioning to your lordſhip, "ſome time ago, in converſation, was not a new thought, juſt "then ſtarted by accident or occaſion, but the reſult of long "reflection; and I have been confirmed in my ſentiments by "the opinion of ſome very judicious perſons with whom I "conſulted."

* I am glad to find that, in my judgment concerning this Author's compoſi-"tion, I have coincided with the opinion of a very able critic: "This eaſy "and ſafe conveyance of meaning, it was Swift's deſire to attain, and for hav-"ing attained, he certainly deſerves praiſe, though, perhaps, not the higheſt "praiſe. For purpoſes merely didactic, when ſomething is to be told that "was not known before, it is in the higheſt degree proper: but againſt that "inattention by which known truths are ſuffered to be neglected, it makes no "proviſion; it inſtructs, but does not perſuade." Johnſon's Lives of the Poets; in Swift.

The diſpoſition of circumſtances in a ſentence, ſuch as ſerve to limit or to qualify ſome aſſertion, or to denote time and place, I formerly ſhewed to be a matter of nicety; and I obſerved, that it ought to be always held a rule, not to crowd ſuch circumſtances together, but rather to intermix them with more capital words, in ſuch different parts of the ſentence as can admit them naturally. Here are two circumſtances of this kind placed together, which had better have been ſeparated; *Some time ago, in converſation*—better thus: *What I had the honour, ſometime ago, of mentioning to your Lordſhip in converſation—was not a new thought*, proceeds our Author, *ſtarted by accident or occaſion*: the different meaning of theſe two words may not, at firſt, occur. They have, however, a diſtinct meaning, and are properly uſed: for it is one very laudable property of our Author's Style, that it is ſeldom incumbered with ſuperfluous, ſynonimous words. *Started by accident*, is, fortuitouſly, or at random; ſtarted *by occaſion*, is by ſome incident, which at that time gave birth to it. His meaning is, that it was not a new thought which either caſually ſprung up in his mind, or was ſuggeſted to him, for the firſt time, by the train of the diſcourſe: but, as he adds, *was the reſult of long reflection*. He proceeds:

"They all agreed, that nothing would be of greater uſe to-
"wards the improvement of knowledge and politeneſs, than ſome
"effectual method for correcting, enlarging, and aſcertaining
"our Language; and they think it a work very poſſible to be
"compaſſed under the protection of a prince, the countenance
"and encouragement of a miniſtry, and the care of proper per-
"ſons choſen for ſuch an undertaking.

This is an excellent ſentence; clear, and elegant. The words are all ſimple, well choſen, and expreſſive; and are arranged in the moſt proper order. It is a harmonious period too, which is a beauty not frequent in our Author. The laſt part of it conſiſts of three members which gradually riſe and ſwell above one another, without any affected or unſuitable pomp; *under the protection of a prince, the countenance and encouragement of a miniſtry, and the care of proper perſons choſen for ſuch an undertaking*. We may remark, in the beginning of the ſentence, the proper uſe of the prepoſition *towards*—*greater uſe towards the improvement*

improvement of knowledge and politeneſs—importing the pointing or tendency of any thing to a certain end; which could not have been ſo well expreſſed by the prepoſition *for*, commonly employed in place of *towards*, by Authors who are leſs attentive, than Dean Swift was, to the force of words.

One fault might, perhaps, be found, both with this and the former ſentence, conſidered as introductory ones. We expect, that an introduction is to unfold, clearly and directly, the ſubject that is to be treated of. In the firſt ſentence, our Author had told us, of a thought he mentioned to his Lordſhip in converſation, which had been the reſult of long reflection, and concerning which he had conſulted judicious perſons. But what that thought was, we are never told directly. We gather it indeed from the ſecond ſentence, wherein he informs us, in what theſe judicious perſons agreed; namely, that ſome method for improving the language was both uſeful and practicable. But this indirect method of opening the ſubject, would have been very faulty in a regular treatiſe; though the eaſe of the epiſtolary form, which our Author here aſſumes in addreſſing his patron, may excuſe it in the preſent caſe.

"I was glad to find your Lordſhip's anſwer in ſo different a "ſtyle from what hath commonly been made uſe of, on the "like occaſions, for ſome years paſt; *That all ſuch thoughts muſt* "*be deferred to a time of peace*; a topic which ſome have carried "ſo far, that they would not have us, by any means, think of "preſerving our civil and religious conſtitution, becauſe we are "engaged in a war abroad."

This ſentence alſo is clear and elegant; only there is one inaccuracy, when he ſpeaks of his Lordſhip's *anſwer* being in ſo different a ſtyle from what had formerly been uſed. His *anſwer* to what? or to whom? For from any thing going before, it does not appear that any application or addreſs had been made to his Lordſhip by thoſe perſons, whoſe opinion was mentioned in the preceding ſentence; and to whom the anſwer, here ſpoken of, naturally refers. There is a little indiſtinctneſs, as I before obſerved, in our Author's manner of introducing his ſubject here. We may obſerve too, that the phraſe, *glad to find your anſwer in ſo different a ſtyle*, though abundantly ſuited to the language

language of converſation, or of a familiar letter, yet, in regular compoſition, requires an additional word—*glad to find your anſwer run in ſo different a ſtyle.*

" It will be among the diſtinguiſhing marks of your miniſ-
" try, my Lord, that you have a genius above all ſuch regards,
" and that no reaſonable propoſal, for the honour, the advan-
" tage, or ornament of your country, however foreign to your
" immediate office, was ever neglected by you."

The phraſe, *a genius above all ſuch regards*, both ſeems ſomewhat harſh, and does not clearly expreſs what the Author means, namely, the *confined views* of thoſe who neglected every thing that belonged to the arts of peace in the time of war. Bating this expreſſion, there is nothing that can be ſubject to the leaſt reprehenſion in this ſentence, nor in all that follows, to the end of the paragraph.

" I confeſs, the merit of this candour and condeſcenſion is
" very much leſſened, becauſe your Lordſhip hardly leaves us
" room to offer our good wiſhes; removing all our difficulties,
" and ſupplying our wants, faſter than the moſt viſionary pro-
" jector can adjuſt his ſchemes. And therefore, my Lord, the
" deſign of this paper is not ſo much to offer you ways and
" means, as to complain of a grievance, the redreſſing of which
" is to be your own work, as much as that of paying the na-
" tion's debts, or opening a trade into the South Sea; and,
" though not of ſuch immediate benefit as either of theſe, or
" any other of your glorious actions, yet, perhaps, in future
" ages not leſs to your honour."

The compliments which the Dean here pays to his patron, are very high and ſtrained; and ſhow, that, with all his ſurlineſs, he was as capable, on ſome occaſions, of making his court to a great man by flattery, as other writers. However, with reſpect to the Style, which is the ſole object of our preſent conſideration, every thing here, as far as appears to me, is faultleſs. In theſe ſentences, and, indeed, throughout this paragraph, in general, which we have now ended, our Author's Style appears to great advantage. We ſee that eaſe and ſimplicity, that correctneſs and diſtinctneſs, which particularly

characteriſe

characteriſe it. It is very remarkable, how few Latiniſed words Dean Swift employs. No writer, in our language, is ſo purely Engliſh as he is, or borrows ſo little aſſiſtance from words of foreign derivation. From none can we take a better model of the choice and proper ſignificancy of words. It is remarkable, in the ſentences we have now before us, how plain all the expreſſions are, and yet, at the ſame time, how ſignificant; and, in the midſt of that high ſtrain of compliment into which he riſes, how little there is of pomp, or glare of expreſſion. How very few writers can preſerve this manly temperance of Style; or would think a compliment of this nature ſupported with ſufficient dignity, unleſs they had embelliſhed it with ſome of thoſe high-ſounding words, whoſe chief effect is no other than to give their language a ſtiff and forced appearance?

"My Lord, I do here, in the name of all the learned and "polite perſons of the nation, complain to your Lordſhip, as "firſt miniſter, that our language is imperfect; that its dai-"ly improvements are by no means in proportion to its daily "corruptions; that the pretenders to poliſh and refine it, have "chiefly multiplied abuſes and abſurdities; and that, in many "inſtances, it offends againſt every part of grammar."

The turn of this ſentence is extremely elegant. He had ſpoken before of a grievance for which he ſought redreſs, and he carries on the alluſion, by entering, here, directly on his ſubject, in the Style of a public repreſentation preſented to the miniſter of ſtate. One imperfection, however, there is in this ſentence, which, luckily for our purpoſe, ſerves to illuſtrate a rule before given, concerning the poſition of adverbs, ſo as to avoid ambiguity. It is in the middle of the ſentence; *that the pretenders to poliſh and refine it, have chiefly multiplied abuſes and abſurdities.* Now, concerning the import of this adverb, *chiefly*, I aſk, whether it ſignifies that theſe pretenders to poliſh the Language, have been the *chief perſons* who have multiplied its abuſes, in diſtinction *from others*; or, that the *chief thing* which theſe pretenders have done, is to multiply the abuſes of our Language, in oppoſition to their *doing any thing to refine it?* Theſe two meanings are really different; and yet, by the poſition which the word *chiefly* has in the ſentence, we are left at a loſs

a loſs in which to underſtand it. The conſtruction would lead us rather to the latter ſenſe; that the chief thing which theſe pretenders have done, is to multiply the abuſes of our Language. But it is more than probable, that the former ſenſe was what the Dean intended, as it carries more of his uſual ſatirical edge; "that the pretended refiners of our Language, "were, in fact, its chief corrupters;" on which ſuppoſition, his words ought to have run thus: *that the pretenders to poliſh and refine it, have been the chief perſons to multiply its abuſes and abſurdities*; which would have rendered the ſenſe perfectly clear.

Perhaps, too, there might be ground for obſerving farther upon this ſentence, that as Language is the object with which it ſets out; *that our Language is extremely imperfect*; and as there follows an enumeration concerning Language, in three particulars, it had been better if Language had been kept the ruling word, or the nominative to every verb, without changing the ſcene; by making *pretenders* the ruling word, as is done in the ſecond member of the enumeration, and then, in the third, returning again to the former word, *Language—That the pretenders to poliſh—and that, in many inſtances, it offends*—I am perſuaded, that the ſtructure of the ſentence would have been more neat and happy, and its unity more complete, if the members of it had been arranged thus: "That our Language is extremely "imperfect; that its daily improvements are by no means in "proportion to its daily corruptions: that, in many inſtances, "it offends againſt every part of grammar; and that the pre-"tenders to poliſh and refine it, have been the chief perſons to "multiply its abuſes and abſurdities." This degree of attention ſeemed proper to be beſtowed in ſuch a ſentence as this, in order to ſhow how it might have been conducted after the moſt perfect manner. Our author, after having ſaid,

"Leſt your Lordſhip ſhould think my cenſure too ſevere, I "ſhall take leave to be more particular;" proceeds in the following paragraph:

"I believe your Lordſhip will agree with me, in the reaſon "why our Language is leſs refined than thoſe of Italy, Spain, or "France."

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I am ſorry to ſay, that now we ſhall have leſs to commend in our Author. For the whole of this paragraph, on which we are entering, is, in truth, perplexed and inaccurate. Even in this ſhort ſentence, we may diſcern an inaccuracy—*why our Language is leſs refined than thoſe of Italy, Spain, and France*; putting the pronoun *thoſe* in the plural, when the antecedent ſubſtantive to which it refers is in the ſingular, *our Language*. Inſtances of this kind may ſometimes be found in Engliſh authors; but they ſound harſh to the ear, and are certainly contrary to the purity of grammar. By a very little attention, this inaccuracy could have been remedied; and the ſentence have been made to run much better in this way; "why our Language is leſs refined than the Italian, Spaniſh, "or French."

"It is plain, that the Latin Tongue, in its purity, was never "in this iſland; towards the conqueſt of which, few or no "attempts were made till the time of Claudius; neither was "that Language ever ſo vulgar in Britain, as it is known to "have been in Gaul and Spain."

To ſay, that *the Latin Tongue, in its purity, was never in this iſland*, is very careleſs Style; it ought to have been, *was never ſpoken in this iſland*. In the progreſs of the ſentence, he means to give a reaſon why the Latin was never ſpoken in its purity amongſt us, becauſe our iſland was not conquered by the Romans till after the purity of their Tongue begun to decline. But this reaſon ought to have been brought out more clearly. This might eaſily have been done, and the relation of the ſeveral parts of the ſentence to each other much better pointed out by means of a ſmall variation; thus: "It is plain, that the "Latin Tongue, in its purity, was never ſpoken in this iſland, "as few or no attempts towards the conqueſt of it were made "till the time of Claudius." He adds, *neither was the Language ever ſo vulgar in Britain*. *Vulgar* was one of the worſt words he could have choſen for expreſſing what he means here; namely, that the Latin Tongue was at no time ſo *general*, or ſo much in *common uſe*, in Britain, as it is known to have been in Gaul and Spain. *Vulgar*, when applied to Language, commonly ſignifies impure, or debaſed Language, ſuch as is

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ſpoken by the low people, which is quite oppoſite to the Author's ſenſe here; for, in place of meaning to ſay, that the Latin ſpoken in Britain was not ſo debaſed, as what was ſpoken in Gaul and Spain; he means juſt the contrary, and had been telling us, that we never were acquainted with the Latin at all, till its purity begun to be corrupted.

"Further, we find that the Roman legions here were at "length all recalled to help their country againſt the Goths, "and other barbarous invaders."

The chief ſcope of this ſentence is, to give a reaſon why the Latin Tongue did not ſtrike any deep root in this iſland, on account of the ſhort continuance of the Romans in it. He goes on:

"Meantime the Britons, left to ſhift for themſelves, and daily "haraſſed by cruel inroads from the Picts, were forced to call "in the Saxons for their defence; who, conſequently, reduc-"ed the greateſt part of the iſland to their own power, drove "the Britons into the moſt remote and mountainous parts, and "the reſt of the country, in cuſtoms, religion, and language, "become wholly Saxon."

This is a very exceptionable ſentence. Firſt, the phraſe *left to ſhift for themſelves*, is rather a low phraſe, and too much in the familiar Style to be proper in a grave treatiſe. Next, as the ſentence advances—*forced to call in the Saxons for their defence, who, conſequently, reduced the greateſt part of the iſland to their own power.* What is the meaning of *conſequently* here? if it means "afterwards," or, "in progreſs of time," this, certainly, is not a ſenſe in which *conſequently* is often taken; and therefore the expreſſion is chargeable with obſcurity. The adverb, *conſequently*, in its moſt common acceptation, denotes one thing following from another, as an effect from a cauſe. If he uſes it in this ſenſe, and means that the Britons being ſubdued by the Saxons, was a neceſſary conſequence of their having called in theſe Saxons to their aſſiſtance, this conſequence is drawn too abruptly, and needed more explanation. For though it has often happened, that nations have been ſubdued by their own auxiliaries, yet this is not a conſequence of ſuch a nature that it can be aſſumed, as ſeems here to be done, for a firſt

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and ſelf-evident principle. But further, what ſhall we ſay to this phraſe, *reduced the greateſt part of the iſland to their own power?* we ſay *reduce to rule, reduce to practice*; we can ſay, that *one nation reduces another to ſubjection*. But when *dominion* or *power* is uſed, we always, as far as I know, ſay, *reduce under their power*. *Reduce to their power*, is ſo harſh and uncommon an expreſſion, that, though Dean Swift's authority in language be very great, yet in the uſe of this phraſe, I am of opinion, that it would not be ſafe to follow his example.

Beſides the particular inaccuracies, this ſentence is chargeable with want of unity in the compoſition of the whole. The perſons and the ſcene are too often changed upon us. Firſt, the Britons are mentioned, who are haraſſed by inroads from the Picts: next, the Saxons appear, who ſubdue the greateſt part of the iſland, and drive the Britons into the mountains; and, laſtly, the reſt of the country is introduced, and a deſcription given of the change made upon it. All this forms a group of various objects, preſented in ſuch quick ſucceſſion, that the mind finds it difficult to comprehend them under one view. Accordingly, it is quoted in the *Elements of Criticiſm*, as an inſtance of a ſentence rendered faulty by the breach of unity.

"This I take to be the reaſon why there are more Latin "words remaining in the Britiſh than the old Saxon; which, "excepting ſome few variations in the orthography, is the "ſame in moſt original words with our preſent Engliſh, as "well as with the German and other northern dialects."

This ſentence is faulty, ſomewhat in the ſame manner with the laſt. It is looſe in the connexion of its parts; and, beſides this, it is alſo too looſely connected with the preceding ſentence. What he had there ſaid, concerning the Saxons expelling the Britons, and changing the cuſtoms, the religion, and the language of the country, is a clear and good reaſon for our preſent language being Saxon rather than Britiſh. This is the inference which we would naturally expect him to draw from the premiſes juſt before laid down: But when he tells us, that *this is the reaſon why there are more Latin words remaining in the Britiſh tongue than in the old Saxon*, we are preſ-

ently at a ſtand. No reaſon for this inference appears. If it can be gathered at all from the foregoing deduction, it is gathered only imperfectly. For, as he had told us, that the Britons had *ſome* connexion with the Romans, he ſhould have alſo told us, in order to make out his inference, that the Saxons never had *any*. The truth is, the whole of this paragraph concerning the influence of the Latin tongue upon ours, is careleſs, perplexed, and obſcure. His argument required to have been more fully unfolded, in order to make it be diſtinctly apprehended, and to give it its due force. In the next paragraph, he proceeds to diſcourſe concerning the influence of the French tongue upon our language. The Style becomes more clear, though not remarkable for great beauty or elegance.

"Edward the Confeſſor having lived long in France, ap-
"pears to have been the firſt who introduced any mixture of
"the French tongue with the Saxon; the court affecting what
"the Prince was fond of, and others taking it up for a faſh-
"ion, as it is now with us. William the Conqueror proceeded
"much further, bringing over with him vaſt numbers of that
"nation, ſcattering them in every monaſtery, giving them great
"quantities of land, directing all pleadings to be in that lan-
"guage, and endeavouring to make it univerſal in the kingdom."

On theſe two ſentences, I have nothing of moment to obſerve. The ſenſe is brought out clearly, and in ſimple unaffected language.

"This, at leaſt, is the opinion generally received; but your
"Lordſhip hath fully convinced me, that the French tongue
"made yet a greater progreſs here under Harry the Second,
"who had large territories on that continent both from his fath-
"er and his wife; made frequent journeys and expeditions
"thither; and was always attended with a number of his
"countrymen, retainers at court."

In the beginning of this ſentence, our Author ſtates an oppoſition between an opinion generally received, and that of his Lordſhip; and in compliment to his patron, he tells us, that his Lordſhip had convinced him of ſomewhat that differed from the general opinion. Thus one muſt naturally underſtand his words: *This, at leaſt, is the opinion generally received; but*

but your Lordſhip hath fully convinced me—Now here there muſt be an inaccuracy of expreſſion. For on examining what went before, there appears no ſort of oppoſition betwixt the generally received opinion, and that of the Author's patron. The general opinion was, that William the Conqueror had proceeded much farther than Edward the Confeſſor, in propagating the French language, and had endeavoured to make it univerſal. Lord Oxford's opinion was, that the French tongue had gone on to make a yet greater progreſs under Harry the Second, than it had done under his predeceſſor William: which two opinions are as entirely conſiſtent with one another, as any can be; and therefore the oppoſition here affected to be ſtated between them, by the adverſative particle *but*, was improper and groundleſs.

"For ſome centuries after, there was a conſtant intercourſe "between France and England by the dominions we poſſeſſed "there, and the conqueſts we made; ſo that our language, "between two and three hundred years ago, ſeems to have "had a greater mixture with French than at preſent; many "words having been afterwards rejected, and ſome ſince the "days of Spenſer; although we have ſtill retained not a few, "which have been long antiquated in France."

This is a ſentence too long and intricate, and liable to the ſame objection that was made to a former one, of the want of unity. It conſiſts of four members, each divided from the ſubſequent by a ſemicolon. In going along, we naturally expect the ſentence is to end at the ſecond of theſe, or at fartheſt, at the third; when to our ſurpriſe, a new member pops out upon us, and fatigues our attention in joining all the parts together. Such a ſtructure of a ſentence is always the mark of careleſs writing. In the firſt member of the ſentence, *a conſtant intercourſe between France and England, by the dominions we poſſeſſed there, and the conqueſts we made*, the conſtruction is not ſufficiently filled up. In place of *intercourſe by the dominions we poſſeſſed*, it ſhould have been—*by reaſon of the dominions we poſſeſſed*—or—*occaſioned by the dominions we poſſeſſed*—and in place of—*the dominions we poſſeſſed there, and the conqueſts we made*, the regular Style is—*the dominions which we poſſeſſed there, and the conqueſts which we made*. The relative pronoun *which*, is indeed

indeed in phraſes of this kind ſometimes omitted: But, when it is omitted, the Style becomes elliptic; and though in converſation, or in the very light and eaſy kinds of writing, ſuch elliptic Style may not be improper, yet in grave and regular writing, it is better to fill up the conſtruction, and inſert the relative pronoun. After having ſaid, *I could produce ſeveral inſtances of both kinds, if it were of any uſe or entertainment*, our Author begins the next paragraph thus:

"To examine into the ſeveral circumſtances by which the "language of a country may be altered, would force me to en-"ter into a wide field."

There is nothing remarkable in this ſentence, unleſs that here occurs the firſt inſtance of a metaphor ſince the beginning of this treatiſe; *entering into a wide field*, being put for beginning an extenſive ſubject. Few writers deal leſs in figurative language than Swift. I before obſerved, that he appears to deſpiſe ornaments of this kind; and though this renders his Style ſomewhat dry on ſerious ſubjects, yet his plainneſs and ſimplicity, I muſt not forbear to remind my readers, is far preferable to an oſtentatious and affected parade of ornament.

"I ſhall only obſerve, that the Latin, the French, and the "Engliſh ſeem to have undergone the ſame fortune. The "firſt from the days of Romulus, to thoſe of Julius Cæſar, ſuf-"fered by perpetual changes; and by what we meet in thoſe "Authors who occaſionally ſpeak on that ſubject, as well as "from certain fragments of old laws, it is manifeſt that the "Latin, three hundred years before Tully, was as unintelligi-"ble in his time, as the French and Engliſh of the ſame peri-"od are now; and theſe two have changed as much ſince "William the Conqueror, (which is but little leſs than 700 "years) as the Latin appears to have done in the like term."

The Dean plainly appears to be writing negligently here. This ſentence is one of that involved and intricate kind, of which ſome inſtances have occurred before; but none worſe than this. It requires a very diſtinct head to comprehend the whole meaning of the period at firſt reading. In one part of it we find extreme careleſſneſs of expreſſion. He ſays, *It is manifeſt that the Latin*, 300 *years before Tully, was as unintelligi-*

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ble in his time, as the Engliſh and French of the ſame period are now. By the Engliſh and French *of the ſame period*, muſt naturally be underſtood, *the Engliſh and French that were ſpoken three hundred years before Tully.* This is the only grammatical meaning his words will bear; and yet aſſuredly what he means, and what it would have been eaſy for him to have expreſſed with more preciſion, is, *the Engliſh and French that were ſpoken* 300 *years ago*; or at a period equally diſtant from our age, as the old Latin, which he had mentioned, was from the age of Tully. But when an author writes haſtily, and does not review with proper care what he has written, many ſuch inaccuracies will be apt to creep into his Style.

"Whether our Language or the French will decline as faſt "as the Roman did, is a queſtion that would perhaps admit "more debate than it is worth. There were many reaſons "for the corruptions of the laſt; as the change of their gov- "ernment to a tyranny, which ruined the ſtudy of eloquence, "there being no further uſe or encouragement for popular "orators; their giving not only the freedom of the city, but "capacity for employments, to ſeveral towns in Gaul, Spain, "and Germany, and other diſtant parts, as far as Aſia, "which brought a great number of foreign pretenders to "Rome; the ſlaviſh diſpoſition of the ſenate and people, by "which the wit and eloquence of the age were wholly turned "into panegyric, the moſt barren of all ſubjects; the great "corruption of manners, and introduction of foreign luxury, "with foreign terms to expreſs it, with ſeveral others that "might be aſſigned; not to mention the invaſion from the "Goths and Vandals, which are too obvious to inſiſt on."

In the enumeration here made of the cauſes contributing towards the corruption of the Roman Language, there are many inaccuracies—*The change of their government to a tyranny* —of whoſe government? He had indeed been ſpeaking of the Roman language, and therefore we gueſs at his meaning; but the Style is ungrammatical; for he had not mentioned the Romans themſelves; and therefore, when he ſays *their government*, there is no antecedent in the ſentence to which the pronoun, *their*, can refer with any propriety—*Giving the capacity for employments to ſeveral towns in Gaul*, is a queſtionable

expreſſion.

LECTURE XXV.

ELOQUENCE, OR PUBLIC SPEAKING. HISTORY OF ELOQUENCE. GRECIAN ELOQUENCE.—— DEMOSTHENES.

HAVING finiſhed that part of the Courſe which relates to Language and Style, we are now to aſcend a ſtep higher, and to examine the ſubjects upon which Style is employed. I begin with what is properly called Eloquence, or Public Speaking. In treating of this, I am to conſider the different kinds and ſubjects of Public Speaking; the manner ſuited to each; the proper diſtribution and management of all the parts of a diſcourſe; and the proper pronunciation or delivery of it. But before entering on any of theſe heads, it may be proper to take a view of the nature of Eloquence in general, and of the ſtate in which it has ſubſiſted in different ages and countries. This will lead into ſome detail; but I hope an uſeful one; as in every art it is of great conſequence to have a juſt idea of the perfection of the art, of the end at which it aims, and of the progreſs which it has made among mankind.

Of Eloquence, in particular, it is the more neceſſary to aſcertain the proper notion, becauſe there is not any thing concerning which falſe notions have been more prevalent. Hence, it has been ſo often, and is ſtill at this day, in diſrepute with many. When you ſpeak to a plain man, of Eloquence, or in praiſe of it, he is apt to hear you with very little attention. He conceives Eloquence to ſignify a certain trick of Speech; the art of varniſhing weak arguments plauſibly; or of ſpeaking, ſo as to pleaſe and tickle the ear. "Give me good ſenſe," ſays he, "and keep your Eloquence for boys." He is in the right, if Eloquence were what he conceives it to be. It would be then a very contemptible art indeed, below the ſtudy of any

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wife or good man. But nothing can be more remote from truth. To be truly eloquent, is to ſpeak to the purpoſe. For the beſt definition which, I think, can be given of Eloquence, is, the art of ſpeaking in ſuch a manner as to obtain the end for which we ſpeak. Whenever a man ſpeaks or writes, he is ſuppoſed, as a rational being, to have ſome end in view; either to inform, or to amuſe, or to perſuade, or, in ſome way or other, to act upon his fellow-creatures. He who ſpeaks or writes, in ſuch a manner as to adapt all his words moſt effectually to that end, is the moſt eloquent man. Whatever then the ſubject be, there is room for Eloquence; in hiſtory, or even in philoſophy, as well as in orations. The definition which I have given of Eloquence, comprehends all the different kinds of it; whether calculated to inſtruct, to perſuade, or to pleaſe. But, as the moſt important ſubject of diſcourſe is action, or conduct, the power of Eloquence chiefly appears when it is employed to influence conduct, and perſuade to action. As it is principally, with reference to this end, that it becomes the object of art, Eloquence may, under this view of it, be defined, the art of perſuaſion.

This being once eſtabliſhed, certain conſequences immediately follow, which point out the fundamental maxims of the art. It follows clearly, that, in order to perſuade, the moſt eſſential requiſites are, ſolid argument, clear method, a character of probity appearing in the ſpeaker, joined with ſuch graces of ſtyle and utterance, as ſhall draw our attention to what he ſays. Good ſenſe is the foundation of all. No man can be truly eloquent without it; for fools can perſuade none but fools. In order to perſuade a man of ſenſe, you muſt firſt convince him; which is only to be done, by ſatisfying his underſtanding of the reaſonableneſs of what you propoſe to him.

This leads me to obſerve, that convincing and perſuading, though they are ſometimes confounded, import, notwithſtanding, different things, which it is neceſſary for us, at preſent, to diſtinguiſh from each other. Conviction affects the underſtanding only; perſuaſion, the will and the practice. It is the buſineſs of the philoſopher to convince me of truth; it is the buſineſs of the orator to perſuade me to act agreeably to it, by engaging my affections on its ſide. Conviction and perſuaſion

do not always go together. They *ought*, indeed, to go together; and *would* do so, if our inclination regularly followed the dictates of our understanding. But as our nature is constituted, I may be convinced, that virtue, justice, or public spirit, are laudable, while, at the same time, I am not persuaded to act according to them. The inclination may revolt, though the understanding be satisfied: the passions may prevail against the judgment. Conviction is, however, always one avenue to the inclination or heart; and it is that which an orator must first bend his strength to gain: for no persuasion is likely to be stable, which is not founded on conviction. But, in order to persuade, the orator must go farther than merely producing conviction; he must consider man as a creature moved by many different springs, and must act upon them all. He must address himself to the passions; he must paint to the fancy, and touch the heart; and, hence, besides solid argument, and clear method, all the conciliating and interesting arts, both of composition and pronunciation, enter into the idea of Eloquence.

An objection may, perhaps, hence be formed against Eloquence; as an art which may be employed for persuading to ill, as well as to good. There is no doubt that it may; and so reasoning may also be, and too often is employed, for leading men into error. But who could think of forming an argument from this against the cultivation of our reasoning powers? Reason, Eloquence, and every art which ever has been studied among mankind, may be abused, and may prove dangerous in the hands of bad men; but it were perfectly childish to contend, that, upon this account, they ought to be abrogated. Give truth and virtue the same arms which you give vice and falsehood, and the former are likely to prevail. Eloquence is no invention of the schools. Nature teaches every man to be eloquent, when he is much in earnest. Place him in some critical situation; let him have some great interest at stake, and you will see him lay hold of the most effectual means of persuasion. The art of oratory proposes nothing more than to follow out that track which nature has first pointed out to men. And the more exactly that this track is pursued, the more that Eloquence is properly studied, the more shall we be guarded against the abuse which bad men make of it, and enabled

abled the better to diſtinguiſh between true Eloquence and the tricks of ſophiſtry.

We may diſtinguiſh three kinds, or degrees of Eloquence. The firſt, and loweſt, is that which aims only at pleaſing the hearers. Such, generally, is the Eloquence of panegyrics, inaugural orations, addreſſes to great men, and other harangues of this ſort. This ornamental ſort of compoſition is not altogether to be rejected. It may innocently amuſe and entertain the mind; and it may be mixed, at the ſame time, with very uſeful ſentiments. But it muſt be confeſſed, that where the ſpeaker has no farther aim than merely to ſhine and to pleaſe, there is great danger of art being ſtrained into oſtentation, and of the compoſition becoming tireſome and languid.

A ſecond and a higher degree of Eloquence is, when the ſpeaker aims not merely to pleaſe, but alſo to inform, to inſtruct, to convince: when his art is exerted, in removing prejudices againſt himſelf and his cauſe, in chooſing the moſt proper arguments, ſtating them with the greateſt force, arranging them in the beſt order, expreſſing and delivering them with propriety and beauty; and thereby diſpoſing us to paſs that judgment, or embrace that ſide of the cauſe, to which he ſeeks to bring us. Within this compaſs, chiefly, is employed the Eloquence of the bar.

But there is a third, and ſtill higher degree of Eloquence, wherein a greater power is exerted over the human mind; by which we are not only conceived, but are intereſted, agitated, and carried along with the ſpeaker; our paſſions are made to riſe together with his; we enter into all his emotions; we love, we deteſt, we reſent, according as he inſpires us; and are prompted to reſolve, or to act, with vigour and warmth. Debate, in popular aſſemblies, opens the moſt illuſtrious field to this ſpecies of Eloquence; and the pulpit alſo admits it.

I am here to obſerve, and the obſervation is of conſequence, that the high Eloquence which I have laſt mentioned, is always the offſpring of paſſion. By paſſion, I mean that ſtate of the mind in which it is agitated, and fired, by ſome object it has in view. A man may convince, and even perſuade others to act, by mere reaſon and argument. But that degree of Eloquence which gains the admiration of mankind, and properly

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denominates one an orator, is never found without warmth or paſſion. Paſſion, when in ſuch a degree as to rouſe and kindle the mind, without throwing it out of the poſſeſſion of itſelf, is univerſally found to exalt all the human powers. It renders the mind infinitely more enlightened, more penetrating, more vigorous and maſterly, than it is in its calm moments. A man, actuated by a ſtrong paſſion, becomes much greater than he is at other times. He is conſcious of more ſtrength and force; he utters greater ſentiments, conceives higher deſigns, and executes them with a boldneſs and a felicity, of which, on other occaſions, he could not think himſelf capable. But chiefly, with reſpect to perſuaſion, is the power of paſſion felt. Almoſt every man, in paſſion, is eloquent. Then he is at no loſs for words and arguments. He tranſmits to others, by a ſort of contagious ſympathy, the warm ſentiments which he feels; his looks and geſtures are all perſuaſive; and nature here ſhows herſelf infinitely more powerful than art. This is the foundation of that juſt and noted rule: "Si vis me flere, dolendum "eſt primum ipſi tibi."

This principle being once admitted, that all high Eloquence flows from paſſion, ſeveral conſequences follow, which deſerve to be attended to; and the mention of which will ſerve to confirm the principle itſelf. For hence the univerſally acknowledged effect of enthuſiaſm, or warmth of any kind, in public ſpeakers, for affecting their audience. Hence all laboured declamation, and affected ornaments of ſtyle, which ſhow the mind to be cool and unmoved, are ſo inconſiſtent with perſuaſive Eloquence. Hence all ſtudied prettineſſes, in geſture or pronunciation, detract ſo greatly from the weight of a ſpeaker. Hence a diſcourſe that is read, moves us leſs than one that is ſpoken, as having leſs the appearance of coming warm from the heart. Hence, to call a man cold, is the ſame thing as to ſay, that he is not eloquent. Hence, a ſceptical man, who is always in ſuſpenſe, and tells nothing ſtrongly; or a cunning mercenary man, who is ſuſpected rather to aſſume the appearance of paſſion than to feel it; have ſo little power over men in public ſpeaking. Hence, in fine, the neceſſity of being, and being believed to be, diſintereſted, and in earneſt, in order to perſuade.

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These are some of the capital ideas which have occurred to me, concerning Eloquence in general; and with which I have thought proper to begin, as the foundation of much of what I am afterwards to suggest. From what I have already said, it is evident that Eloquence is a high talent and of great importance in society; and that it requires both natural genius, and much improvement from art. Viewed as the art of persuasion, it requires, in its lowest state, soundness of understanding, and considerable acquaintance with human nature; and, in its higher degrees, it requires, moreover, strong sensibility of mind, a warm and lively imagination, joined with correctness of judgment, and an extensive command of the power of Language; to which must also be added, the graces of pronunciation and delivery. Let us next proceed, to consider in what state Eloquence has subsisted in different ages and nations.

It is an observation made by several writers, that Eloquence is to be looked for only in free states. Longinus, in particular, at the end of his treatise on the Sublime, when assigning the reason why so little sublimity of genius appeared in the age wherein he lived, illustrates this observation with a great deal of beauty. Liberty, he remarks, is the nurse of true genius; it animates the spirit, and invigorates the hopes of men; excites honourable emulation, and a desire of excelling in every Art. All other qualifications, he says, you may find among those who are deprived of liberty; but never did a slave become an orator; he can only be a pompous flatterer. Now, though this reasoning be, in the main, true; it must, however, be understood with some limitations. For, under arbitrary governments, if they be of the civilized kind, and give encouragement to the arts, ornamental Eloquence may flourish remarkably. Witness France at this day, where, ever since the reign of Louis XIV. more of what may justly be called Eloquence, within a certain sphere, is to be found, than, perhaps, in any other nation of Europe; though freedom be enjoyed by some of them in a much greater degree. Their sermons, and orations pronounced on public occasions, are not only polite and elegant harangues, but several of them are uncommonly spirited, animated with bold figures, and rise to a degree of

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the Sublime. Their Eloquence, however, in general, muſt be confeſſed to be of the flowery, rather than the vigorous kind; calculated more to pleaſe and ſoothe, than to convince and perſuade. High, manly, and forcible Eloquence is, indeed, to be looked for only, or chiefly, in the regions of freedom. Under arbitrary governments, beſides the general turn of ſoftneſs and effeminacy which ſuch governments may be juſtly ſuppoſed to give to the ſpirit of a nation, the art of ſpeaking cannot be ſuch an inſtrument of ambition, buſineſs, and power, as it is in more democratical ſtates. It is confined within a narrower range; it can be exerted only in the pulpit, or at the bar; but is excluded from thoſe great ſcenes of public buſineſs, where the ſpirits of men have the freeſt play; where important affairs are tranſacted, and perſuaſion, of courſe, is more ſeriouſly ſtudied. Wherever man can acquire moſt power over man by means of reaſon and diſcourſe, which certainly is under a free ſtate of government, there we may naturally expect that true Eloquence will be beſt underſtood, and carried to the greateſt height.

Hence, in tracing the riſe of oratory, we need not attempt to go far back into the early ages of the world, or ſearch for it among the monuments of Eaſtern or Egyptian antiquity. In thoſe ages, there was, indeed, an Eloquence of a certain kind; but it approached nearer to poetry, than to what we properly call oratory. There is reaſon to believe, as I formerly ſhewed, that the Language of the firſt ages was paſſionate and metaphorical; owing partly to the ſcanty ſtock of words, of which Speech then conſiſted; and partly to the tincture which Language naturally takes from the ſavage and uncultivated ſtate of men, agitated by unreſtrained paſſions, and ſtruck by events, which to them are ſtrange and ſurpriſing. In this ſtate, rapture and enthuſiaſm, the parents of poetry, had an ample field. But while the intercourſe of men was as yet unfrequent, and force and ſtrength were the chief means employed in deciding controverſies, the arts of oratory and perſuaſion, of reaſoning and debate, could be but little known. The firſt empires that aroſe, the Aſſyrian and Egyptian, were of the deſpotic kind. The whole power was in the hands of one, or at moſt of a few. The multitude were accuſtomed to a blind reverence: they were led, not perſuaded; and none of thoſe refinements of

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ſociety, which make public ſpeaking an object of importance, were as yet introduced.

It is not till the riſe of the Grecian republics, that we find any remarkable appearances of Eloquence as the art of perſuaſion; and theſe gave it ſuch a field as it never had before, and, perhaps, has never had again ſince that time. And, therefore, as the Grecian Eloquence has ever been the object of admiration to thoſe who have ſtudied the powers of Speech, it is neceſſary, that we fix our attetion, for a little, on this period.

Greece was divided into a multitude of petty ſtates. Theſe were governed, at firſt, by kings who were called Tyrants, and who being, in ſucceſſion, expelled from all theſe ſtates, there ſprung up a great number of democratical governments, founded nearly on the ſame plan, animated by the ſame high ſpirit of freedom, mutually jealous, and rivals of each other. We may compute the flouriſhing period of thoſe Grecian ſtates, to have laſted from the battle of Marathon, till the time of Alexander the Great, who ſubdued the liberties of Greece; a period which comprehends about 150 years, and within which are to be found moſt of their celebrated poets and philoſophers, but chiefly their orators: for though poetry and philoſophy were not extinct among them after that period, yet Eloquence hardly made any figure.

Of theſe Grecian republics, the moſt noted, by far, for Eloquence, and, indeed for arts, of every kind, was that of Athens. The Athenians were an ingenious, quick, ſprightly people; practiſed in buſineſs, and ſharpened by frequent and ſudden revolutions, which happened in their government. The genius of their government was entirely democratical; their legiſlature conſiſted of the whole body of the people. They had, indeed, a Senate of five hundred; but in the general convention of the citizens was placed the laſt reſort; and affairs were conducted there, altogether, by reaſoning, ſpeaking, and a ſkilful application to the paſſions and intereſts of a popular aſſembly. There, laws were made, peace and war decreed, and thence the magiſtrates were choſen. For the higheſt honours of the ſtate were alike open to all; nor was the meaneſt tradeſman excluded from a ſeat in their ſupreme courts. In ſuch a ſtate, Eloquence, it is obvious, would be much ſtudied,

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as the ſureſt means of riſing to influence and power; and what ſort of Eloquence? Not that which was brilliant merely, and ſhowy, but that which was found, upon trial, to be moſt effectual for convincing, intereſting and perſuading the hearers. For there, public ſpeaking was not a mere competition for empty applauſe, but a ſerious contention for that public leading, which was the great object both of the men of ambition, and the men of virtue.

Among a nation ſo enlightened and acute, and where the higheſt attention was paid to every thing elegant in the arts, we may naturally expect to find the public taſte refined and judicious. Accordingly, it was improved to ſuch a degree, that the Attic taſte and Attic manner have paſſed into a proverb. It is true, that ambitious demagogues, and corrupt orators, did ſometimes dazzle and miſlead the people, by a ſhowy but falſe Eloquence; for the Athenians, with all their acuteneſs, were factious and giddy, and great admirers of every novelty. But when ſome important intereſt drew their attention, when any great danger rouſed them, and put their judgment to a ſerious trial, they commonly diſtinguiſhed, very juſtly, between genuine and ſpurious Eloquence: and hence Demoſthenes triumphed over all his opponents; becauſe he ſpoke always to the purpoſe, affected no inſignificant parade of words, uſed weighty arguments, and ſhewed them clearly where their intereſt lay. In critical conjunctures of the ſtate, when the public was alarmed with ſome preſſing danger, when the people were aſſembled, and proclamation was made by the crier, for any one to riſe and deliver his opinion upon the preſent ſituation of affairs, empty declamation and ſophiſtical reaſoning would not only have been hiſſed, but reſented and puniſhed by an aſſembly ſo intelligent and accuſtomed to buſineſs. Their greateſt orators trembled on ſuch occaſions, when they roſe to addreſs the people, as they knew they were to be held anſwerable for the iſſue of the counſel which they gave. The moſt liberal endowments of the greateſt princes never could found ſuch a ſchool for true oratory, as was formed by the nature of the Athenian republic. Eloquence there ſprung, native and vigorous, from amidſt the contentions of faction and freedom, of public buſineſs, and of active life; and not from that retirement and ſpeculation, which

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we are apt ſometimes to fancy more favourable to Eloquence than they are found to be.

Piſiſtratus, who was cotemporary with Solon, and ſubverted his plan of government, is mentioned by Plutarch, as the firſt who diſtinguiſhed himſelf among the Athenians by application to the arts of Speech. His ability in theſe arts, he employed for raiſing himſelf to the ſovereign power; which, however, when he had attained, he exerciſed with moderation. Of the orators who flouriſhed between his time and the Peloponneſian war, no particular mention is made in hiſtory. Pericles, who died about the beginning of that war, was properly the firſt who carried Eloquence to a great height; to ſuch a height, indeed, that it does not appear he was ever afterwards ſurpaſſed. He was more than an orator; he was alſo a ſtateſman and a general; expert in buſineſs, and of conſummate addreſs. For forty years, he governed Athens with abſolute ſway; and hiſtorians aſcribe his influence, not more to his political talents than to his Eloquence, which was of that forcible and vehement kind, that bore every thing before it, and triumphed over the paſſions and affections of the people. Hence he had the ſurname of Olympias given him; and it was ſaid, that, like Jupiter, he thundered when he ſpoke. Though his ambition be liable to cenſure, yet great virtues certainly he had; and it was the confidence which the people repoſed in his integrity, that gave ſuch power to his Eloquence; a circumſtance, without which the influence of public ſpeaking in a popular ſtate can ſeldom go far. He appears to have been generous, magnanimous, and public ſpirited: he raiſed no fortune to himſelf; he expended indeed great ſums of the public money, but chiefly on public works; and at his death is ſaid to have valued himſelf principally on having never obliged any citizen to wear mourning on his account, during his long adminiſtration. It is a remarkable particular recorded of Pericles by Suidas, that he was the firſt Athenian who compoſed, and put into writing, a diſcourſe deſigned for the public.

Poſterior to Pericles, in the courſe of the Peloponneſian war, aroſe Cleon, Alcibiades, Critias, and Theramenes, eminent citizens of Athens, who were all diſtinguiſhed for their Eloquence. They were not orators by profeſſion; they were not formed by ſchools, but by a much more powerful education,

that of buſineſs and debate; where man ſharpened man, and civil affairs carried on by public ſpeaking, called forth every exertion of the mind. The manner or ſtyle of oratory which then prevailed, we learn from the orations in the hiſtory of Thucydides, who alſo flouriſhed in the ſame age. It was manly, vehement, and conciſe, even to ſome degree of obſcurity. "Grandes erant verbis," ſays Cicero, "crebri ſententiis, compreſſione rerum breves, et, ob eam ipſam cauſam, interdum "ſubobſcuri."* A manner very different from what in modern times we would conceive to be the ſtyle of popular oratory; and which tends to give a high idea of the acuteneſs of thoſe audiences to which they ſpoke.

The power of Eloquence having, after the days of Pericles, become an object of greater conſequence than ever, this gave birth to a ſet of men till then unknown, called rhetoricians, and ſometimes ſophiſts, who aroſe in multitudes during the Peloponneſian war; ſuch as Protagoras, Prodicas, Thraſymus, and one who was more eminent than all the reſt, Gorgias of Leontium. Theſe ſophiſts joined to their art of rhetoric a ſubtile logic, and were generally a ſort of metaphyſical ſceptics. Gorgias, however, was a profeſſed maſter of Eloquence only. His reputation was prodigious. He was highly venerated in Leontium of Sicily, his native city; and money was coined with his name upon it. In the latter part of his life, he eſtabliſhed himſelf at Athens, and lived till he had attained the age of 105 years. Hermogenes (de Ideis, l. ii. cap. 9.) has preſerved a fragment of his, from which we ſee his ſtyle and manner. It is extremely quaint and artificial; full of antitheſis and pointed expreſſion; and ſhows how far the Grecian ſubtility had already carried the ſtudy of language. Theſe rhetoricians did not content themſelves with delivering general inſtructions concerning Eloquence to their pupils, and endeavouring to form their taſte; but they profeſſed the art of giving them receipts for making all ſorts of orations; and of teaching them how to ſpeak for, and againſt, every cauſe whatever. Upon this plan, they were the firſt who treated of common places, and the artificial invention of arguments and topics for every ſubject. In the

* "They were magnificent in their expreſſions; they abounded in thought; "they compreſſed their matter into few words, and, by their brevity, were "ſometimes obſcure."

the hands of such men, we may easily believe that oratory would degenerate from the masculine strain it had hitherto held, and become a trifling and sophistical art; and we may justly deem them the first corrupters of true Eloquence. To them, the great Socrates opposed himself. By a profound, but simple reasoning peculiar to himself, he exploded their sophistry; and endeavoured to recal men's attention from that abuse of reasoning and discourse which began to be in vogue, to natural language, and sound and useful thought.

In the same age, though somewhat later than the philosopher above mentioned, flourished Isocrates, whose writings are still extant. He was a professed rhetorican, and by teaching Eloquence, he acquired both a great fortune, and higher fame than any of his rivals in that profession. No contemptible orator he was. His orations are full of morality and good sentiments: they are flowing and smooth; but too destitute of vigour. He never engaged in public affairs, nor pleaded causes; and accordingly his orations are calculated only for the shade; "Pompæ," Cicero allows, "magis quam pugnæ ap-"tior; ad voluptatem aurium accommodatus potius quam ad "judiciorum certamen."* The style of Gorgias of Leontium was formed into short sentences, composed generally of two members balanced against each other. The style of Isocrates, on the contrary, is swelling and full; and he is said to be the first who introduced the method of composing in regular periods, which had a studied music and harmonious cadence; a manner which he has carried to a vicious excess. What shall we think of an orator, who employed ten years in composing one discourse, still extant, entitled the Panegyric? How much frivolous care must have been bestowed on all the minute elegance of words and sentences? Dionysius of Halicarnassus has given us upon the orations of Isocrates, as also upon those of some other Greek orators, a full and regular treatise, which is, in my opinion, one of the most judicious pieces of ancient criticism extant, and very worthy of being consulted. He commends the splendour of Isocrates's style, and the morality of his sentiments; but severely censures his affectation, and the uniform

* "More fitted for show than for debate; better calculated for the amuse-"ment of an audience, than for judicial contests."

uniform regular cadence of all his ſentences. He holds him to be a florid declaimer; not a natural perſuaſive ſpeaker. Cicero, in his critical works, though he admits his failings, yet diſcovers a propenſity to be very favourable to that "plena ac numeroſa oratio," that ſwelling and muſical ſtyle, which Iſocrates introduced; and with the love of which, Cicero himſelf was, perhaps, ſomewhat infected. In one of his treatiſes (Orat. ad M. Brut.) he informs us, that his friend Brutus and he differed in this particular, and that Brutus found fault with his partiality to Iſocrates. The manner of Iſocrates generally catches young people, when they begin to attend to compoſition; and it is very natural that it ſhould do ſo. It gives them an idea of that regularity, cadence and magnificence of ſtyle, which fills the ear: but when they come to write or ſpeak for the world, they will find this oſtentatious manner unfit, either for carrying on buſineſs, or commanding attention. It is ſaid, that the high reputation of Iſocrates, prompted Ariſtotle, who was nearly his cotemporary, or lived but a little after him, to write his inſtitutions of rhetoric; which are indeed formed upon a plan of Eloquence very different from that of Iſocrates, and the rhetoricians of that time. He ſeems to have had it in view to direct the attention of orators much more towards convincing and affecting their hearers, than towards the muſical cadence of periods.

Iſæus and Lyſias, ſome of whoſe orations are preſerved, belong alſo to this period. Lyſias was ſomewhat earlier than Iſocrates, and is the model of that manner which the ancients call the "Tenius vel Subtilis." He has none of Iſocrates's pomp. He is every where pure and attic in the higheſt degree; ſimple and unaffected; but wants force, and is ſometimes frigid in his compoſitions.* Iſæus is chiefly remarkable for

* In the judicious compariſon, which Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus makes of the merits of Lyſias and Iſocrates, he aſcribes to Lyſias, as the diſtinguiſhing character of his manner, a certain grace or elegance ariſing from ſimplicity; "χαριεσσα γαρ η Λυσιου λεξις εχειν το Χαριεν δ' Ισοκρατης, βουλεται." "The ſtyle of Ly"ſias has graceſulneſs for its nature: that of Iſocrates ſeeks to have it." In the art of narration, as diſtinct, probable, and perſuaſive, he holds Lyſias to be ſuperior to all orators; at the ſame time, he admits that his compoſition is more adapted to private litigation than to great ſubjects. He convinces, but he does not elevate nor animate. The magnificence and ſplendour of Iſocrates is more ſuited to great occaſions. He is more agreeable than Lyſias; and, in dignity of ſentiment, far excels him. With regard to the affectation which is viſible in Iſocrates's manner, he concludes what he ſays of it with the following

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for being the master of the great Demosthenes, in whom, it must be acknowledged, Eloquence shone forth with higher splendor, than perhaps in any that ever bore the name of an orator, and whose manner and character, therefore, must deserve our particular attention.

I shall not spend any time upon the circumstances of Demosthenes's life; they are well known. The strong ambition which he discovered to excel in the art of speaking; the unsuccessfulness of his first attempts; his unwearied perseverance in surmounting all the disadvantages that arose from his person and address; his shutting himself up in a cave, that he might study with less distraction; his declaiming by the sea-shore, that he might accustom himself to the noise of a tumultuous assembly, and with pebbles in his mouth, that he might correct a defect in his speech; his practising at home with a naked sword hanging over his shoulder, that he might check an ungraceful motion, to which he was subject; all those circumstances which, we learn from Plutarch, are very encouraging to such as study Eloquence, as they show how far art and application may avail, for acquiring an excellence which nature seemed unwilling to grant us.

Despising the affected and florid manner which the rhetoricians of that age followed, Demosthenes returned to the forcible and manly Eloquence of Pericles; and strength and vehemence

ing excellent observations, which should never be forgotten by any who aspire to be true orators. "Της μεντοι αγωγης των περιοδων το κυκλοειδες, και των σχηματισμων της λεξεως το μειρακιωδες, ουκ εδοκιμαζον· δουλευει γαρ η διανοια πολλακις τω ρυθμω της λεξεως, και το κομψον λειπεται το αληθινον. κρατιστον τ' επιτηδευμα εν διαλεκτω πολιτικη, και αγωνιω, το ομοιοτατον τω κατα φυσιν. βουλεται δε φυσις τοις νοημασιν εστεωθαι την λεξιν, η τη λεξει τα νοηματα· συμβουλω δε δη περι μολεμου και ειρηνης λεγοντι και ιδιωτη τον περι ψυχης τρεχοντι κινδυνον εν δικαστας, τα κομψα, και θεατρικα, και μειρακιωδη ταυτι ουκ οιδα ηντινα δυναιτ' αν παρασχειν ωφελειαν· μαλλον δ' οιδα ότι και βλαβης αν αιτια γενοιτο. χαριεντισμος γαρ πας εν σπουδη, και καλως γνωμενος, αωρον πραγμα και πολεμιστα τον ελεω." Judic. de Isocrate, 558. "His studied circumflexion of periods, and juvenile "affectation of the flowers of Speech, I do not approve. The thought is "frequently made subservient to the music of the sentence; and elegance is "preferred to reason. Whereas, in every discourse where business and affairs "are concerned, nature ought to be followed and nature certainly dictates "that the expression should be an object subordinate to the sense, not the "sense to the expression. When one rises to give public counsel concerning "war and peace, or takes the charge of a private man, who is standing at the "bar to be tried for his life, those studied decorations, those theatrical graces "and juvenile flowers are out of place. Instead of being of service, they are "detrimental to the cause we espouse. When the contest is of a serious kind, "ornaments, which at another time would have beauty, then lose their effect, "and prove hostile to the affections which we wish to raise in our hearers."

vehemence form the principal characteriſtics of his ſtyle. Never had orator a finer field than Demoſthenes in his Olynthiacs and Philippics, which are his capital orations; and, no doubt, to the nobleneſs of the ſubject, and to that integrity and public ſpirit which eminently breathe in them, they are indebted for much of their merit. The ſubject, is to rouſe the indignation of his countrymen againſt Philip of Macedon, the public enemy of the liberties of Greece; and to guard them againſt the inſidious meaſures, by which that crafty prince endeavoured to lay them aſleep to danger. In the proſecution of this end, we ſee him taking every proper method to animate a people, renowned for juſtice, humanity, and valour, but in many inſtances become corrupt and degenerate. He boldly taxes them with their venality, their indolence, and indifference to the public cauſe; while, at the ſame time, with all the art of an orator, he recals the glory of their anceſtors to their thoughts, ſhows them that they are ſtill a flouriſhing and a powerful people, the natural protectors of the liberty of Greece, and who wanted only the inclination to exert themſelves, in order to make Philip tremble. With his cotemporary orators, who were in Philip's intereſt, and who perſuaded the people to peace, he keeps no meaſures, but plainly reproaches them as the betrayers of their country. He not only prompts to vigorous conduct, but he lays down the plan of that conduct; he enters into particulars; and points out, with great exactneſs, the meaſures of execution. This is the ſtrain of theſe orations. They are ſtrongly animated; and full of the impetuoſity and fire of public ſpirit. They proceed in a continued train of inductions, conſequences, and demonſtrations, founded on ſound reaſon. The figures which he uſes, are never ſought after; but always riſe from the ſubject. He employs them ſparingly indeed; for ſplendor and ornament are not the diſtinctions of this orator's compoſition. It is an energy of thought peculiar to himſelf, which forms his character, and ſets him above all others. He appears to attend much more to things than to words. We forget the orator, and think of the buſineſs. He warms the mind, and impels to action. He has no parade and oſtentation; no methods of inſinuation; no laboured introductions; but is like a man full of his ſubject, who, after

preparing

preparing his audience by a ſentence or two for hearing plain truths, enters directly on buſineſs.

Demoſthenes appears to great advantage, when contraſted with Æſchines in the celebrated oration "pro Corona." Æſchines was his rival in buſineſs, and perſonal enemy; and one of the moſt diſtinguiſhed orators of that age. But when we read the two orations, Æſchines is feeble in compariſon of Demoſthenes, and makes much leſs impreſſion on the mind. His reaſonings concerning the law that was in queſtion, are indeed very ſubtile; but his invective againſt Demoſthenes is general and ill ſupported. Whereas Demoſthenes is a torrent, that nothing can reſiſt. He bears down his antagoniſt with violence; he draws his character in the ſtrongeſt colours; and the particular merit of that oration is, that all the deſcriptions in it are highly pictureſque. There runs through it a ſtrain of magnanimity and high honour: the orator ſpeaks with that ſtrength and conſcious dignity which great actions and public ſpirit alone inſpire. Both orators uſe great liberties with one another; and, in general, that unreſtrained licenſe which ancient manners permitted, even to the length of abuſive names and downright ſcurrility, as appears both here and in Cicero's Philippics, hurts and offends a modern ear. What thoſe ancient orators gained by ſuch a manner in point of freedom and boldneſs, is more than compenſated by want of dignity; which ſeems to give an advantage, in this reſpect, to the greater decency of modern ſpeaking.

The ſtyle of Demoſthenes is ſtrong and conciſe, though ſometimes, it muſt not be diſſembled, harſh and abrupt. His words are very expreſſive; his arrangement is firm and manly; and though far from being unmuſical, yet it ſeems difficult to find in him that ſtudied, but concealed number, and rythmus, which ſome of the ancient critics are fond of attributing to him. Negligent of thoſe leſſer graces, one would rather conceive him to have aimed at that ſublime which lies in ſentiment. His action and pronunciation are recorded to have been uncommonly vehement and ardent; which, from the manner of his compoſition, we are naturally led to believe. The character which one forms of him, from reading his works, is of the auſtere, rather than the gentle kind. He is on every occaſion,

grave,

grave, ſerious, paſſionate; takes every thing on a high tone; never lets himſelf down, nor attempts any thing like pleaſantry. If any fault can be found with his admirable Eloquence, it is, that he ſometimes borders on the hard and dry. He may be thought to want ſmoothneſs and grace; which Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus attributes to his imitating too cloſely the manner of Thucydides, who was his great model for ſtyle, and whoſe hiſtory he is ſaid to have written eight times over with his own hand. But theſe defects are far more than compenſated, by that admirable and maſterly force of maſculine Eloquence, which, as it overpowered all who heard it, cannot, at this day, be read without emotion.

After the days of Demoſthenes, Greece loſt her liberty; Eloquence of courſe languiſhed, and relapſed again into the feeble manner introduced by the rhetoricians and ſophiſts. Demetrius Phalereus, who lived in the next age to Demoſthenes, attained indeed ſome character, but he is repreſented to us as a flowery, rather than a perſuaſive ſpeaker, who aimed at grace rather than ſubſtance. "Delectabat Athenienſes," ſays Cicero, "magis quam inflammabat." "He amuſed the "Athenians, rather than warmed them." And after his time, we hear of no more Grecian orators of any note.

LECTURE

LECTURE XXVI.

HISTORY OF ELOQUENCE CONTINUED. ROMAN ELOQUENCE. CICERO. MODERN ELOQUENCE.

HAVING treated of the riſe of Eloquence, and of its ſtate among the Greeks, we now proceed to conſider its progreſs among the Romans, where we ſhall find one model, at leaſt, of Eloquence, in its moſt ſplendid and illuſtrious form. The Romans were long a martial nation, altogether rude, and unſkilled in arts of any kind. Arts were late introduced among them; they were not known till after the conqueſt of Greece; and the Romans always acknowledged the Grecians as their maſters in every part of learning.

> Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, & artes
> Intulit a greſti Latio.*—— Hor. Epiſt. ad Aug.

As the Romans derived their Eloquence, poetry, and learning from the Greeks, ſo they muſt be confeſſed to be far inferior to them in genius for all theſe accompliſhments. They were a more grave and magnificent, but a leſs acute and ſprightly people. They had neither the vivacity nor the ſenſibility of the Greeks; their paſſions were not ſo eaſily moved, nor their conceptions ſo lively; in compariſon of them, they were a phlegmatic nation. Their language reſembled their character; it was regular, firm, and ſtately; but wanted that ſimple and expreſſive naiveté, and, in particular, that flexibility to ſuit every different mode and ſpecies of compoſition, for which the

* When conquer'd Greece brought in her captive arts,
She triumph'd o'er her ſavage conqueror's hearts;
Taught our rough verſe its numbers to refine,
And our rude ſtyle with elegance to ſhine. FRANCIS.

the Greek tongue is diſtinguiſhed above that of every other country.

> Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo
> Muſa loqui*—— ARS POET.

And hence, when we compare together the various rival productions of Greece and Rome, we ſhall always find this diſtinction obtain, that in the Greek productions there is more native genius; in the Roman, more regularity and art. What the Greeks invented, the Romans poliſhed; the one was the original, rough ſometimes, and incorrect; the other, a finiſhed copy.

As the Roman government, during the republic, was of the popular kind, there is no doubt but that, in the hands of the leading men, public ſpeaking became early an engine of government, and was employed for gaining diſtinction and power. But in the rude unpoliſhed times of the State, their ſpeaking was hardly of that ſort that could be called Eloquence. Though Cicero, in his Treatiſe, "de Claris Oratoribus," endeavours to give ſome reputation to the elder Cato, and thoſe who were his cotemporaries, yet he acknowledges it to have been "Aſperum et horridum genus dicendi," a rude and harſh ſtrain of ſpeech. It was not till a ſhort time preceding Cicero's age, that the Roman orators roſe into any note. Craſſus and Antonius, two of the ſpeakers in the dialogue De Oratore, appear to have been the moſt eminent, whoſe different manners Cicero deſcribes with great beauty in that dialogue, and in his other rhetorical works. But as none of their productions are extant, nor any of Hortenſius's, who was Cicero's cotemporary and rival at the bar, it is needleſs to tranſcribe from Cicero's writings the account which he gives of thoſe great men, and of the character of their Eloquence.†

The

* To her lov'd Greeks the Muſe indulgent gave,
To her lov'd Greeks with greatneſs to conceive;
And in ſublimer tone their language raiſe:
Her Greeks were only covetous of praiſe. FRANCIS.

† Such as are deſirous of particular information on this head, had better have recourſe to the original, by reading Cicero's three books de Oratore, and his other two treatiſes, entitled, the one, Brutus, Sive de Claris Oratoribus; the other, Orator, ad M. Brutum; which, on ſeveral accounts, well deſerve peruſal.

The object in this period, moſt worthy to draw our attention, is Cicero himſelf; whoſe name alone ſuggeſts every thing that is ſplendid in oratory. With the hiſtory of his life, and with his character, as a man and a politician, we have not at preſent any direct concern. We conſider him only as an eloquent ſpeaker; and, in this view, it is our buſineſs to remark both his virtues, and his defects, if he has any. His virtues are, beyond controverſy, eminently great. In all his orations there is high art. He begins generally, with a regular exordium; and with much preparation and inſinuation prepoſſeſſes the hearers, and ſtudies to gain their affections. His method is clear and his arguments are arranged with great propriety. His method is indeed more clear than that of Demoſthenes; and this is one advantage which he has over him. We find every thing in its proper place; he never attempts to move, till he has endeavoured to convince; and in moving, eſpecially the ſofter paſſions, he is very ſucceſsful. No man that ever wrote, knew the power and force of words better than Cicero. He rolls them along with the greateſt beauty and pomp; and, in the ſtructure of his ſentences, is curious and exact to the higheſt degree. He is always full and flowing, never abrupt. He is a great amplifier of every ſubject; magnificent, and in his ſentiments highly moral. His manner is on the whole diffuſe, yet it is often happily varied, and ſuited to the ſubject. In his four orations, for inſtance, againſt Catiline, the tone and ſtyle of each of them, particularly the firſt and laſt, is very different, and accommodated with a great deal of judgment to the occaſion, and the ſituation in which they were ſpoken. When a great public object rouſed his mind, and demanded indignation and force, he departs conſiderably from that looſe and declamatory manner to which he inclines at other times, and becomes exceedingly cogent and vehement. This is the caſe in his orations againſt Anthony, and in thoſe two againſt Verres and Catiline.

Together with thoſe high qualities which Cicero poſſeſſes, he is not exempt from certain defects, of which it is neceſſary to take notice. For the Ciceronian Eloquence is a pattern ſo dazzling by its beauties, that, if not examined with accuracy and judgment, it is apt to betray the unwary into a faulty imitation;

itation; and I am of opinion, that it has ſometimes produced this effect. In moſt of his orations, eſpecially thoſe compoſed in the earlier part of his life, there is too much art; even carried the length of oſtentation. There is too viſible a parade of Eloquence. He ſeems often to aim at obtaining admiration, rather than at operating conviction, by what he ſays. Hence, on ſome occaſions, he is ſhowy rather than ſolid; and diffuſe, where he ought to have been preſſing. His ſentences are, at all times, round and ſonorous; they cannot be accuſed of monotony, for they poſſeſs variety of cadence; but, from too great a ſtudy of magnificence, he is ſometimes deficient in ſtrength. On all occaſions, where there is the leaſt room for it, he is full of himſelf. His great actions, and the real ſervices which he had performed to his country, apologize for this in part; ancient manners, too, impoſed fewer reſtraints from the ſide of decorum; but, even after theſe allowances made, Cicero's oſtentation of himſelf cannot be wholly palliated; and his orations, indeed all his works, leave on our minds the impreſſion of a good man, but withal, of a vain man.

The defects which we have now taken notice of in Cicero's Eloquence, were not unobſerved by his own cotemporaries. This we learn from Quintilian, and from the author of the dialogue, "de Cauſis Corruptæ Eloquentiæ." Brutus, we are informed, called him, "fractum et elumbem," broken and enervated. "Suorum temporum homines," ſays Quintilian, "inceſſere audebant eum ut tumidiorem & Aſianum, et re-"dundantem, et in repetitionibus nimium, et in ſalibus ali-"quando frigidum, & in compoſitione fractum et exſultantem, "& pene viro molliorem."* Theſe cenſures were undoubtedly carried too far; and ſavour of malignity and perſonal enmity. They ſaw his defects, but they aggravated them; and the ſource of theſe aggravations can be traced to the difference which prevailed in Rome, in Cicero's days, between two great parties, with reſpect to Eloquence. The "Attici," and the "Aſiani." The former, who call themſelves the Attics, were the patrons of what they conceived to be the chaſte, ſimple and natural

* "His cotemporaries ventured to reproach him as ſwelling, redundant and "Aſiatic; too frequent in repetitions; in his attempts towards wit ſometimes "cold; and in the ſtrain of his compoſition, feeble, deſultory, and more effem-"inate than became a man."

natural ſtyle of Eloquence; from which they accuſed Cicero as having departed, and as leaning to the florid Aſiatic manner. In ſeveral of his rhetorical works, particularly in his "Orator ad "Brutum," Cicero, in his turn, endeavours to expoſe this ſect, as ſubſtituting a frigid and jejune manner, in place of the true Attic Eloquence; and contends, that his own compoſition was formed upon the real Attic Style. In the 10th chapter of the laſt book of Quintilian's Inſtitutions, a full account is given of the diſputes between theſe two parties; and of the Rhodian, or middle manner between the Attics and the Aſiatics. Quintilian himſelf declares on Cicero's ſide; and, whether it be called Attic or Aſiatic, prefers the full, the copious, and the amplifying ſtyle. He concludes with this very juſt obſervation: "Plures "ſunt Eloquentiæ facies; ſed ſtultiſſimum eſt quærere, ad quam "recturus ſe ſit orator; cum omnis ſpecies, quæ modo recta "eſt, habeat uſum. Utetur enim, ut res exiget, omnibus; "nec pro cauſâ modo, ſed pro partibus cauſæ."*

On the ſubject of comparing Cicero and Demoſthenes, much has been ſaid by critical writers. The different manners of theſe two princes of Eloquence, and the diſtinguiſhing characters of each, are ſo ſtrongly marked in their writings, that the compariſon is, in many reſpects, obvious and eaſy. The character of Demoſthenes is vigour and auſterity; that of Cicero is gentleneſs and inſinuation. In the one, you find more manlineſs; in the other, more ornament. The one is more harſh, but more ſpirited and cogent; the other more agreeable, but withal looſer and weaker.

To account for this difference, without any prejudice to Cicero, it has been ſaid, that we muſt look to the nature of their different auditories; that the refined Athenians followed with eaſe the conciſe and convincing Eloquence of Demoſthenes; but that a manner more popular, more flowery, and declamatory, was requiſite in ſpeaking to the Romans, a people leſs acute, and leſs acquainted with the arts of ſpeech. But this is not ſatisfactory. For we muſt obſerve, that the Greek orator ſpoke much oftener before a mixed multitude, than the Roman. Almoſt

* "Eloquence admits of many different forms; and nothing can be more "fooliſh than to inquire, by which of them an orator is to regulate his com-"poſition; ſince every form, which is in itſelf juſt, has its own place and uſe. "The orator, according as circumſtances require, will employ them all; ſuit-"ing them not only to the cauſe or ſubject of which he treats, but to the dif-"ferent parts of that ſubject."

Almoſt all the public buſineſs of Athens was tranſacted in popular aſſemblies. The common people were his hearers, and his judges. Whereas Cicero generally addreſſed himſelf to the "Patres Conſcripti," or in criminal trials to the Prætor, and the ſelect judges; and it cannot be imagined, that the perſons of higheſt rank, and beſt education in Rome, required a more diffuſe manner of pleading than the common citizens of Athens, in order to make them underſtand the cauſe, or reliſh the ſpeaker. Perhaps we ſhall come nearer the truth, by obſerving, that to unite together all the qualities, without the leaſt exception, that form a perfect orator, and to excel equally in each of thoſe qualities, is not to be expected from the limited powers of human genius. The higheſt degree of ſtrength is, I ſuſpect, never found united with the higheſt degree of ſmoothneſs and ornament; equal attentions to both are incompatible; and the genius that carries ornament to its utmoſt length, is not of ſuch a kind, as can excel as much in vigour. For there plainly lies the characteriſtical difference between theſe two celebrated orators.

It is a diſadvantage to Demoſthenes, that, beſides his conciſeneſs, which ſometimes produces obſcurity, the language, in which he writes, is leſs familiar to moſt of us than the Latin, and that we are leſs acquainted with the Greek antiquities than we are with the Roman. We read Cicero with more eaſe, and of courſe with more pleaſure. Independent of this circumſtance, too, he is, no doubt, in himſelf, a more agreeable writer than the other. But notwithſtanding this advantage, I am of opinion, that were the ſtate in danger, or ſome great public intereſt at ſtake, which drew the ſerious attention of men, an oration in the ſpirit and ſtrain of Demoſthenes, would have more weight, and produce greater effects than one in the Ciceronian manner. Were Demoſthenes's Philippics ſpoken in a Britiſh aſſembly, in a ſimilar conjuncture of affairs, they would convince and perſuade at this day. The rapid ſtyle, the vehement reaſoning, the diſdain, anger, boldneſs, freedom, which perpetually animate them, would render their ſucceſs infallible over any modern aſſembly. I queſtion whether the ſame can be ſaid of Cicero's orations; whoſe Eloquence, however beautiful, and however well ſuited to the Roman taſte,

yet

yet borders oftener on declamation, and is more remote from the manner in which we now expect to hear real business and causes of importance treated.*

In comparing Demosthenes and Cicero, most of the French Critics incline to give the preference to the latter. P. Rapin the Jesuit, in the parallels which he has drawn between some of the most eminent Greek and Roman writers, uniformly decides in favour of the Roman. For the preference which he gives to Cicero, he assigns, and lays stress on, one reason of a pretty extraordinary nature; viz. that Demosthenes could not possibly have so complete an insight as Cicero into the manners and passions of men: Why?—Because he had not the advantage of perusing Aristotle's treatise of Rhetoric; wherein, says our critic, he has fully laid open that mystery: and, to support this weighty argument, he enters into a controversy with A. Gellius, in order to prove that Aristotle's Rhetoric was not published till after Demosthenes had spoken, at least, his most considerable orations. Nothing can be more childish. Such orators as Cicero and Demosthenes, derived their knowledge of the human passions, and their power of moving them, from higher sources than any treatise of Rhetoric. One French critic has indeed departed from the common track; and, after bestowing on Cicero those just praises to which the consent of so many ages shows him to be entitled, concludes, however, with giving the palm to Demosthenes. This is Fenelon, the famous archbishop of Cambray, and author of Telemachus; himself surely no enemy to all the graces and flowers of composition. It is in his Reflections on Rhetoric and Poetry, that he gives this judgment; a small tract, commonly published along with his dialogues on Eloquence.† These dialogues and reflections

* In this judgment I concur with Mr. David Hume, in his essay upon Eloquence. He gives it as his opinion, that, of all human productions, the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection.

† As his expressions are remarkably happy and beautiful, the passage here referred to deserves to be inserted. "Je ne crains pas de dire, que Demosthene "me paroit supérieur à Cicéron. Je proteste que personne n'admire plus "Cicéron que je fais. Il embellit tout ce qu'il touche. Il fait honneur à la pa- "role. Il fait des mots ce qu'um autre n'en sauroit faire. Il a je ne sai com- "bien de sortes d'esprits. Il est même court, & vehement, toutes les fois qu'il veut

reflections are particularly worthy of perusal, as containing, I think, the justest ideas on the subject, that are to be met with in any modern critical writer.

The reign of Eloquence, among the Romans, was very short. After the age of Cicero, it languished, or rather expired; and we have no reason to wonder at this being the case. For not only was liberty entirely extinguished, but arbitrary power felt in its heaviest and most oppressive weight: Providence having, in its warmth, delivered over the Roman empire to a succession of some of the most execrable tyrants that ever disgraced and scourged the human race. Under their government, it was naturally to be expected that taste would be corrupted, and genius discouraged. Some of the ornamental arts, less intimately connected with liberty, continued, for a while, to prevail; but for that masculine Eloquence, which had exercised itself in the senate, and in the public affairs, there was no longer any place. The change which was produced on Eloquence, by the nature of the government, and the state of the public manners, is beautifully described in the Dialogue de Causis corruptæ Eloquentiæ which is attributed by some, to Tacitus, by others, to Quintilian. Luxury, effeminacy, and flattery, overwhelmed all. The forum, where so many great affairs had been transacted, was now become a desart. Private causes were still pleaded; but the public was no longer interested; nor any general attention drawn to what passed there: "Unus inter hæc, et alter, dicen-
"ti assistit; et res velut in solitudine agitur. Oratori autem
"clamore plausuque opus est, et velut quodam theatro, qualia
"quotidie antiquis oratoribus contingebant; cum tot ac tam
"nobiles forum coarctarent; cum clientelæ, & tribus, &
"municipiorum

"veut l'estre; contre Catiline, contre Verres, contre Antoine. Mais on re-
"marque quelque parure dans son discours. L'art y est merveilleux; mais
"on l'entrevoit. L'orateur en pensant au salut de la république, ne s'oublie
"pas, et ne se laisse pas oublier. Demosthene pariot sortir de soi, et ne voir
"que la patrie. Il ne cherche point le beau; il le fait, sans y penser. Il est
"au-dessus de l'admiration. Il se sert de la parole, comme un homme modeste
"de son habit, pour se couvrir. Il tonne; il foudroye. C'est un torrent qui
"entraine tout. On ne peut le critiquer, par cequ'on est saisi. On pense aux
"choses qu'il dit, & non à ses paroles. On le perd de vue. On n'est occupé
"que de Philippe qui envahit tout. Je suis charmé de ces deux orateurs:
"mais j'avoue que je suis moins touché de l'art infini, et de la magnifique él-
"oquence de Cicéron, que de la rapide simplicité de Demosthene."

" municipiorum legationes, periclitantibus assisterent; cum in " plerisque judiciis crederet populus Romanus, sua interesse " quid judicaretur."*

In the schools of the declaimers, the corruption of Eloquence was completed. Imaginary and fantastic subjects, such as had no real life, or business, were made the themes of declamation; and all manner of false and affected ornaments were brought into vogue: " Pace vestra liceat dixisse," says Petronius Arbiter, to the declaimers of his time, " primi om- " nem Eloquentiam perdidistis. Levibus enim ac inanibus " sonis ludibria quædam excidanto, effecistis ut corpus oratio- " evervaretur atque caderet. Et ideo ego existimo adolescen- " tulos in scholis stultissimos fieri, quia nihil ex iis, quæ in usu " habemus, aut vident; sed piratas cum catenis in littore " stantes; et tyrannos edicta scribentes quibus imperent filiis " ut patrum suorum capita præcidant; sed responsa, in pesti- " lentia data, ut virgines tres aut plures immolentur; sed mel- " litos verborum globulos, & omnia quasi papavere, et sesamo " sparsa. Qui inter hæc nutriuntur, non magis sapere possunt, " quam bene olere qui in culina habitant."† In the hands of the Greek rhetoricians, the manly and sensible Eloquence of their first noted speakers, degenerated, as I formerly showed, into subtility

* " The Courts of Judicature are, at present, so unfrequented that the " orator seems to stand alone, and talk to bare walls. But Eloquence rejoices " in the bursts of loud applause, and exults in a full audience; such as used to " press round the ancient orators, when the forum stood crowded with nobles; " when a numerous retinue of clients, when foreign ambassadors, when tribes, " and whole cities assisted at the debate; and when, in many trials, the Ro- " man people understood themselves to be concerned in the event."

† " With your permission, I must be allowed to say, that you have been the " first destroyers of all true Eloquence. For, by those mock subjects, on " which you employ your empty and unmeaning compositions, you have ener- " vated and overthrown all that is manly and substantial in oratory. I cannot " but conclude, that the youth whom you educate, must be totally perverted " in your schools, by hearing and seeing nothing which has any affinity to real " life, or human affairs; but stories of pirates standing on the shore, provided " with chains for loading their captives, and of tyrants issuing their edicts, by " which children are commanded to cut off the heads of their parents; but " responses given by oracles in the time of pestilence, that several virgins must " be sacrificed; but glittering ornaments of phrase, and a style highly spiced, if " we may say so, with affected conceits. They who are educated in the midst " of such studies, can no more acquire a good taste, than they can smell sweet " who dwell perpetually in a kitchen."

ſubtility and ſophiſtry; in the hands of the Roman declaimers, it paſſed into the quaint and affected; into point and antitheſis. This corrupt manner begins to appear in the writings of Seneca; and ſhows itſelf, alſo, in the famous panegyric of Pliny the Younger on Trajan, which may be conſidered as the laſt effort of Roman oratory. Though the author was a man of genius, yet it is deficient in nature and eaſe. We ſee, throughout the whole, a perpetual attempt to depart from the ordinary way of thinking, and to ſupport a forced elevation.

In the decline of the Roman Empire, the introduction of Chriſtianity gave riſe to a new ſpecies of Eloquence, in the apologies, ſermons, and paſtoral writings of the Fathers of the Church. Among the Latin Fathers, Lactantius and Minutius Felix, are the moſt remarkable for purity of Style; and, in a later age, the famous St. Auguſtine poſſeſſes a conſiderable ſhare of ſprightlineſs and ſtrength. But none of the Fathers afford any juſt models of Eloquence. Their Language, as ſoon as we deſcend to the third or fourth century, becomes harſh; and they are, in general, infected with the taſte of that age, a love of ſwoln and ſtrained thoughts, and of the play of words. Among the Greek Fathers, the moſt diſtinguiſhed, by far, for his oratorical merit, is St. Chryſoſtom. His Language is pure; his ſtyle highly figured. He is copious, ſmooth, and ſometimes pathetic. But he retains, at the ſame time, much of that character which has been always attributed to the Aſiatic Eloquence, diffuſe and redundant to a great degree, and often overwrought and tumid. He may be read, however, with advantage, for the Eloquence of the pulpit, as being freer from falſe ornaments than the Latin Fathers.

As there is nothing more that occurs to me, deſerving particular attention in the middle age, I paſs now to the ſtate of Eloquence in modern times. Here, it muſt be confeſſed, that, in no European nation, public ſpeaking has been conſidered as ſo great an object, or been cultivated with ſo much care, as in Greece or Rome. Its reputation has never been ſo high; its effects have never been ſo conſiderable; nor has that high and ſublime kind of it, which prevailed in thoſe ancient ſtates, been ſo much as aimed at: notwithſtanding, too, that a new profeſſion has been eſtabliſhed, which gives peculiar advantages to

oratory,

oratory, and affords it the nobleſt field; I mean, that of the church. The genius of the world ſeems, in this reſpect, to have undergone ſome alteration. The two countries where we might expect to find moſt of the ſpirit of Eloquence, are France and Great Britain: France on account of the diſtinguiſhed turn of the nation towards all the liberal arts, and of the encouragement which, for this century paſt, thoſe arts have received from the public; Great Britain, on account both of the public capacity and genius, and of the free government which it enjoys. Yet, ſo it is, that, in neither of thoſe countries, has the talent of public ſpeaking riſen near to the degree of its ancient ſplendor. While, in other productions of genius, both in proſe and in poetry, they have contended for the prize with Greece and Rome; nay, in ſome compoſitions, may be thought to have ſurpaſſed them; the names of Demoſthenes and Cicero, ſtand, at this day, unrivalled in fame; and it would be held preſumptuous and abſurd, to pretend to place any modern whatever in the ſame, or even in a nearly equal, rank.

It ſeems particularly ſurpriſing, that Great Britain ſhould not have made a more conſpicuous figure in Eloquence than it has hitherto attained; when we conſider the enlightened, and, at the ſame time, the free and bold genius of the country, which ſeems not a little to favour oratory; and when we conſider that, of all the polite nations, it alone poſſeſſes a popular government, or admits into the legiſlature, ſuch numerous aſſemblies as can be ſuppoſed to lie under the dominion of Eloquence.* Notwithſtanding this advantage, it muſt be confeſſed, that, in moſt parts of Eloquence, we are undoubtedly inferior, not only to the Greeks and Romans by many degrees, but alſo to the French. We have philoſophers, eminent and conſpicuous, perhaps, beyond any nation, in all the parts of ſcience. We have both taſte and erudition, in a high degree. We have hiſtorians, we have poets of the greateſt name; but of orators, or public ſpeakers, how little have we to boaſt? And where are the

* Mr. Hume, in his Eſſay on Eloquence, makes this obſervation, and illuſtrates it with his uſual elegance. He, indeed, ſuppoſes, that no ſatisfactory reaſons can be given to account for the inferiority of modern to ancient Eloquence. In this, I differ from him, and ſhall endeavour, before the concluſion of this Lecture, to point out ſome cauſes to which, I think, it may, in a great meaſure, be aſcribed, in the three great ſcenes of public ſpeaking.

the monuments of their genius to be found? In every period we have had ſome who made a figure, by managing the debates in parliament; but that figure was commonly owing to their wiſdom, or their experience in buſineſs, more than to their talents for oratory; and, unleſs in ſome few inſtances, wherein the power of oratory has appeared, indeed, with much luſtre, the art of parliamentary ſpeaking rather obtained to ſeveral a temporary applauſe, than conferred upon any a laſting renown. At the bar, though, queſtionleſs, we have many able pleaders, yet few or none of their pleadings have been thought worthy to be tranſmitted to poſterity; nor have commanded attention, any longer than the cauſe which was the ſubject of them intereſted the public; while, in France, the pleadings of Patru, in the former age, and thoſe of Coching and D'Agueſſeau, in later times, are read with pleaſure, and are often quoted as examples of Eloquence by the French critics. In the ſame manner, in the pulpit, the Britiſh divines have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by the moſt accurate and rational compoſitions which, perhaps, any nation can boaſt of. Many printed ſermons we have, full of good ſenſe, and of ſound divinity and morality; but the Eloquence to be found in them, the power of perſuaſion, of intereſting and engaging the heart, which is, or ought to be, the great object of the pulpit, is far from bearing a ſuitable proportion to the excellence of the matter. There are few arts, in my opinion, farther from perfection, than that of preaching is among us; the reaſons of which, I ſhall afterwards have occaſion to diſcuſs; in proof of the fact, it is ſufficient to obſerve, that an Engliſh ſermon, inſtead of being a perſuaſive animated oration, ſeldom riſes beyond the ſtrain of correct and dry reaſoning. Whereas, in the ſermons of Boſſuet, Maſſillon, Bourdaloue, and Flechier, among the French, we ſee a much higher ſpecies of Eloquence aimed at, and in a great meaſure attained, than the Britiſh preachers have in view.

In general, the characteriſtical difference between the ſtate of Eloquence in France and in Great Britain is, that the French have adopted higher ideas both of pleaſing and perſuading by means of oratory, though, ſometimes, in the execution they fail. In Great Britain, we have taken up Eloquence on a low-

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of key; but in our execution, as was naturally to be expected, have been more correct. In France, the ſtyle of their orators is ornamented with bolder figures; and their diſcourſe carried on with more amplification, more warmth and elevation. The compoſition is often very beautiful; but ſometimes, alſo, too diffuſe, and deficient in that ſtrength and cogency which renders Eloquence powerful; a defect owing, perhaps, in part, to the genius of the people, which leads them to attend fully as much to ornament as to ſubſtance; and, in part, to the nature of their government, which, by excluding public ſpeaking from having much influence on the conduct of public affairs, deprives Eloquence of its beſt opportunity for acquiring nerves and ſtrength. Hence the pulpit is the principal field which is left for their Eloquence. The members, too, of the French academy give harangues at their admiſſion, in which genius often appears; but, labouring under the misfortune of having no ſubject to diſcourſe upon, they run commonly into flattery and panegyric, the moſt barren and inſipid of all topics.

I obſerved before that the Greeks and Romans aſpired to a more ſublime ſpecies of Eloquence, than is aimed at by the Moderns. Theirs was of the vehement and paſſionate kind, by which they endeavoured to inflame the mind of their hearers, and hurry their imaginations away: and, ſuitable to this vehemence of thought, was their vehemence of geſture and action; the "ſupploſio pedis,"* the "percuſſio frontis & femoris,"* were, as we learn from Cicero's writings, uſual geſtures among them at the bar; though now they would be reckoned extravagant any where, except upon the ſtage. Modern Eloquence is much more cool and temperate; and in Great Britain eſpecially, has confined itſelf almoſt wholly to the argumentative and rational. It is much of that ſpecies which the ancient critics called the "Tenuis," or "Subtilis;" which aims at convincing and inſtructing, rather than affecting the paſſions, and aſſumes a tone not much higher than common argument and diſcourſe.

Several reaſons may be given, why modern Eloquence has been ſo limited, and humble in its efforts. In the firſt place, I am of opinion, that this change muſt, in part, be aſcribed to that

* Vide, De Clar. Orator.

that correct turn of thinking, which has been ſo much ſtudied in modern times. It can hardly be doubted, that, in many efforts of mere genius, the ancient Greeks and Romans excelled us; but, on the other hand, that, in accuracy and cloſeneſs of reaſoning on many ſubjects, we have ſome advantage over them, ought, I think, to be admitted alſo. In proportion as the world has advanced, philoſophy has made greater progreſs. A certain ſtrictneſs of good ſenſe has, in this iſland particularly, been cultivated, and introduced into every ſubject. Hence we are more on our guard againſt the flowers of Elocution; we are on the watch; we are jealous of being deceived by oratory. Our public ſpeakers are obliged to be more reſerved than the ancients, in their attempts to elevate the imagination, and warm the paſſions; and by the influence of prevailing taſte, their own genius is ſobered and chaſtened, perhaps, in too great a degree. It is likely too, I confeſs, that what we fondly aſcribe to our correctneſs and good ſenſe, is owing, in a great meaſure, to our phlegm and natural coldneſs. For the vivacity and ſenſibility of the Greeks and Romans, more eſpecially of the former, ſeem to have been much greater than ours, and to have given them a higher reliſh of all the beauties of oratory.

Beſides theſe national conſiderations, we muſt, in the next place, attend to peculiar circumſtances in the three great ſcenes of public ſpeaking, which have proved diſadvantageous to the growth of Eloquence among us. Though the parliament of Great Britain be the nobleſt field which Europe, at this day, affords to a public ſpeaker, yet Eloquence has never been ſo powerful an inſtrument there, as it was in the popular aſſemblies of Greece and Rome. Under ſome former reigns, the high hand of arbitrary power bore a violent ſway; and in later times, miniſterial influence has generally prevailed. The power of ſpeaking, though always conſiderable, yet has been often found too feeble to counterbalance either of theſe; and, of courſe, has not been ſtudied with ſo much zeal and fervour, as where its effect on buſineſs was irreſiſtible and certain.

At the bar, our diſadvantage, in compariſon of the ancients, is great. Among them, the judges were generally numerous; the laws were few and ſimple; the deciſion of cauſes was left,

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in a great measure, to equity and the sense of mankind. Here was an ample field for what they termed judicial Eloquence. But among the moderns, the case is quite altered. The system of law is become much more complicated. The knowledge of it is thereby rendered so laborious an attainment, as to be the chief object of a lawyer's education, and in a manner, the study of his life. The art of speaking is but a secondary accomplishment, to which he can afford to devote much less of his time and labour. The bounds of Eloquence, besides, are now much circumscribed at the bar; and except, in a few cases, reduced to arguing from strict law, statute, or precedent; by which means knowledge, much more than oratory, is become the principal requisite.

With regard to the pulpit, it has certainly been a great disadvantage, that the practice of reading sermons, instead of repeating them from memory, has prevailed so universally in England. This may, indeed, have introduced accuracy; but it has done great prejudice to Eloquence; for a discourse read, is far inferior to an oration spoken. It leads to a different sort of composition, as well as of delivery; and can never have an equal effect upon any audience. Another circumstance, too, has been unfortunate. The sectaries and fanatics, before the Restoration, adopted a warm, zealous, and popular manner of preaching; and those who adhered to them, in aftertimes, continued to distinguish themselves by somewhat of the same manner. The odium of these sects drove the established church from that warmth which they were judged to have carried too far, into the opposite extreme of a studied coolness, and composure of manner. Hence, from the art of persuasion, which preaching ought always to be, it has passed, in England, into mere reasoning and instruction; which not only has brought down the Eloquence of the pulpit to a lower tone than it might justly assume; but has produced this farther effect, that, by accustoming the public ear to such cool and dispassionate discourses, it has tended to fashion other kinds of public speaking upon the same model.

Thus I have given some view of the state of Eloquence in modern times, and endeavoured to account for it. It has, as we have seen, fallen below that splendour which it maintained

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in ancient ages; and from being ſublime and vehement, has come down to be temperate and cool.* Yet, ſtill in that region which it occupies, it admits great ſcope; and, to the defect of zeal and application, more than to the want of capacity and genius, we may aſcribe its not having hitherto riſen higher. It is a field where there is much honour yet to be reaped; it is an inſtrument which may be employed for purpoſes of the higheſt importance. The ancient models may ſtill, with much advantage, be ſet before us for imitation: though, in that imitation, we muſt, doubtleſs, have ſome regard to what modern taſte and modern manners will bear; of which I ſhall afterwards have occaſion to ſay more.

END OF VOLUME I.